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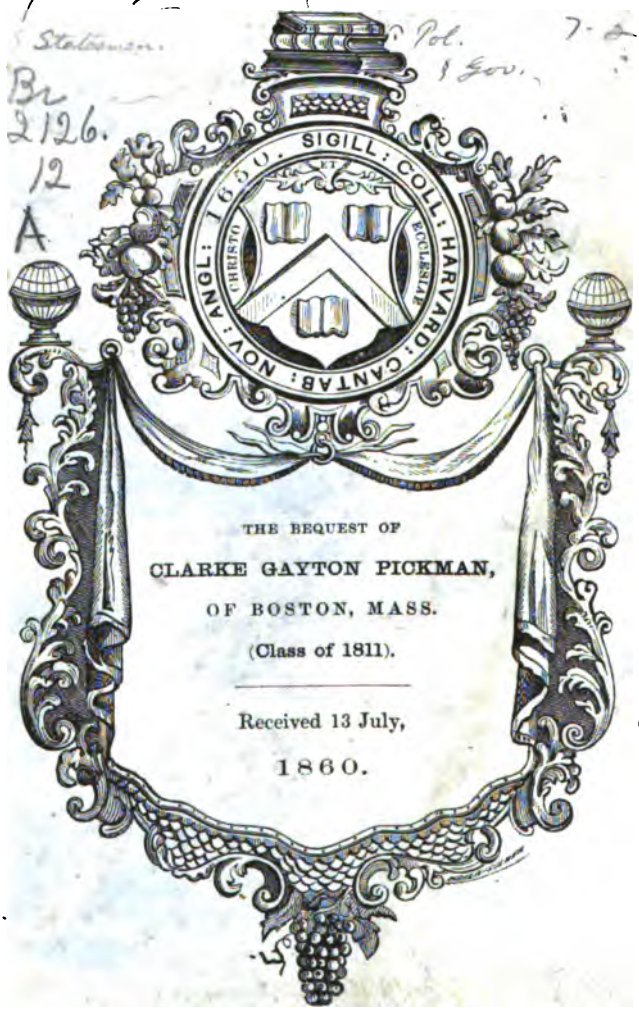
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THE BEQUEST OF
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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

STATESMEN

WHO FLOURISHED IN

THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

REMARKS ON PARTY, AND AN APPENDIX.

BY HENRY LORD BROUGHAM, F.R.S.,

AND MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.



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INTRODUCTION

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The affairs of men, the interests and the history of nations, the relative value of institutions as discovered by their actual working, the merits of different systems of policy as tried by their effects, are all very imperfectly examined without a thorough knowledge of the individuals who administered the systems and presided over the management of the public concerns. The history of empires is, indeed, the history of men, not only of the nominal rulers of the people, but of all the leading persons who exerted a sensible influence over the destinies of their fellow-creatures, whether the traces of that influence survived themselves, or, as in the case of lesser minds, their power was confined to their own times.

But, in another view, this kind of inquiry, this species of record, is even more important. Not only the world at large is thus instructed, but the character of statesmen and rulers is improved. Examples are held up of the faults which they are to avoid, and of the virtues which they are to cultivate. Nor can history ever be the school of potentates, whether on or near the throne, unless the character and the conduct of their predecessors be thoroughly scrutinized. This task has been attempted in the following work, which aspires, therefore, to a higher office than merely amusing the vacant hours of the idle (the hours a little more unemployed than the bulk of their time), and aims at recording, for the warning or for the encouragement of the great, the errors or the wisdom, the vices or the virtues, of their predecessors. It is a well-meant contribution, of which the merit is very humbly rated by its author, to the fund of Useful Knowledge as applied to the Education of those upon whose information or ignorance the fortunes of mankind in an especial manner depend. But, how moderate soever may be the merits of the contributor, the value of the contribution cannot easily be estimated too highly, if, by only stating the facts with careful accuracy, and drawing the inferences with undeviating candour, those who voluntarily assume the government of nations are taught to regard their duties as paramount to their interests, and made to learn that ignorance of their craft is in their calling criminal, by having placed before their eyes the examples of others—their signal punishment to deter from vice, their glorious reward to stimulate in well-doing. This salutary lesson will be taught if the friends of mankind, the votaries of duty, of peace, of freedom, be held up to veneration, while their enemies, themselves the slaves of ambition or avarice, and who would forge fetters for their fellow-creatures or squander their substance or their blood, are exhibited to the scorn and hatred of after-ages.

The chief objection to such a work, undertaken so soon after the persons whom it undertakes to portray have left this earthly scene, arises from the difficulty of preserving strict impartiality in considering their merits. This difficulty is not denied; its formidable magnitude is not underrated. Even if no human feelings

with respect to men, between whom and ourselves there may have existed relations of amity or of hostility, swayed the mind; yet are we ever prone to view through a distorting medium those whose principles agreed with or differed from our own upon questions still of daily occurrence—of men, too, whose party connexions united them with classes still in existence and actively engaged in the proceedings of the present day.

But, while this is admitted to render the attempt difficult, it may not be found to make it hopeless. At any rate we are placed in a choice of evils. A postponement till the day when there should be no possibility of passion or prejudice shading the path of the historian, may extinguish the recollections, also, which alone can give value to his narrative. The transfer of the work to mere strangers, who can be animated by no feeling of a personal kind, leaves it in hands, if not altogether incapable of performing it satisfactorily, at least incomparably inferior in the power of giving vivid likenesses of contemporary statesmen. At the very least, these portraitures may be regarded as materials for history, if not worthy of being called historical themselves; and future penmen may work upon them with the benefit of contemporary testimony as to facts, though free from the bias which may have influenced the conclusions. The author can only affirm, and this he does most conscientiously, that he has ever felt under a sacred obligation to pursue the truth of his resemblances without either exaggeration or concealment; that he has written, or endeavoured to write, as if he had lived in a remote age or country from those whose rulers he has endeavoured to describe; and that if any prejudices or predilections have operated upon his mind, they have been unknown to himself. He is quite aware that some may consider this as a very equivocal test of his impartiality, if they do not rather see in it an additional symptom of blind prepossession. But he thinks the praise bestowed upon known political adversaries, and the disapproval, admitted to be just, of conduct frequently held by the party for whose services to the cause of freedom he is most grateful, will be taken as some evidence of general impartiality, though it may not suffice to exempt him from the charge of having sometimes unwarily fallen into the snares that beset the path of whoever would write contemporary annals.

By far the greater part of the articles which have ever appeared before are materially altered or enlarged, some of them almost written over again; while a great many are entirely new in every part: as those of Lords Mansfield, Thurlow, Loughborough, and North, Chief Justice Gibbs, Sir W. Grant, Franklin, Gustavus III., Joseph II., Catherine II., Queen Elizabeth.—Much of George IV., the Emperor Napoleon, Lord Eldon, Sir W. Scott, is new; and Mirabeau's public character, with the whole of Sir P. Francis, Mr. Horne Tooke, Lord King, Mr. Ricardo, Charles Carrol, Necker, Carnot, Lafayette, and Madame de Staël, are new.

No distinguished statesman of George III.'s time has been omitted, except one very eminent person, Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Lansdowne, to whom, however, occasion has been taken of doing some justice against the invectives of mere party violence and misrepresentation by which he was assailed. The reason of the omission has been of a personal nature. The long and uninterrupted friendship which has prevailed between the writer of these pages and Lord Shelburne's son and representative, both in public and private life, would have made any account of him wear the appearance of a panegyric or a defence of his conduct, rather than a judgment pronounced on its merits. If it should be

urged that a similar reason ought to have prevented the appearance of other articles, such as that upon Sir S. Romilly, Mr. Horner, and Lord King, the answer is plain. Personal friendship with those individuals themselves gave him the means of judging for himself, and that friendship was only another consequence of the merits which he was called upon to describe and to extol. But in Lord Shelburne's case, friendship for the son might have been supposed to influence an account of the father, who was personally unknown to the author.

It would be a very great mistake to suppose that there is no higher object in submitting these Sketches to the world than the gratification of curiosity respecting eminent statesmen, or even a more important purpose, the maintenance of a severe standard of taste respecting Oratorical Excellence. The main object in view has been the maintenance of a severe standard of Public Virtue, by constantly painting political profligacy in those hateful colours which are natural to it, though sometimes obscured by the lustre of talents, especially when seen through the false glare shed by success over public crimes. To show mankind who are their real benefactors—to teach them the wisdom of only exalting the friends of peace, of freedom, and of improvement—to warn them against the folly, so pernicious to themselves, of lavishing their applauses upon their worst enemies, those who disturb the tranquillity, assail the liberties, and obstruct the improvement of the world—to reclaim them from the yet worser habit, so nearly akin to vicious indulgence, of palliating cruelty and fraud committed on a large scale, by regarding the success which has attended those foul enormities, or the courage and the address with which they have been perpetrated—these are the views which have guided the pen that has attempted to sketch the History of George III.'s times, by describing the statesmen who flourished in them. With these views a work was begun many years ago, and interrupted by professional avocations—the history of two reigns in our own annals, those of Harry V. and Elizabeth, deemed glorious for the arts of war and of government, commanding largely the admiration of the vulgar, justly famous for the capacity which they displayed, but extolled upon the false assumption that foreign conquest is the chief glory of a nation, and that habitual and dexterous treachery towards all mankind is the first accomplishment of a sovereign. To relate the story of those reigns in the language of which sound reason prescribes the use—to express the scorn of falsehood and the detestation of cruelty which the uncorrupted feelings of our nature inspire—to call wicked things by their right names, whether done by princes and statesmen, or by vulgar and more harmless malefactors—was the plan of that work. Longer experience of the world has only excited a stronger desire to see such lessons inculcated, and to help in tearing off the veil which the folly of mankind throws over the crimes of their rulers. But it was deemed better to direct the attention of the people, in the first instance, to more recent times, better known characters, and more interesting events. In this opinion these Historical Sketches had their origin.

It remains to be explained why the Dialogue upon Monarchical and Republican Government has been omitted in the present publication, after being announced in the advertisement. Not only would the insertion of that piece have extended this volume to an inconvenient size, but it would have given the work a controversial aspect and engendered political animosities, thus impeding the effects intended to be produced by a work avoiding all partial or violent discussions. For this reason the appearance of the Dialogue has been postponed. It was written some years ago; its doctrines have been destined to receive very material con-

firmation from subsequent events; they are very certain to become at no remote period the prevailing faith of the country.

But, although this more general discussion has for the present been omitted, constant opportunities have been afforded, in the course of these Sketches, for contemplating the comparative vices and advantages of the two forms of Government, —for holding up to Sovereigns the imminent perils into which they rush by setting up their pretensions, and gratifying their caprices, at the expense of their people's rights and interests—for reminding the people of the mischiefs occasioned to themselves by violent and sudden changes to which the state of society has not been accommodated—for exposing the evil consequences of those abuses to which party connexions are liable—and, above all, for teaching the important duty incumbent on all men, under what Government soever they live, the sacred duty of forming their own opinions upon reflection, nor suffering them to be dictated by others whose object it is to deceive and to betray. In proportion as the People are thus educated and fitted for the task of Self-government will it be both safe and expedient to entrust them with an increased share of power; and it would be difficult to fix any bounds to the extent of that share, other than are set to their own improvement in political knowledge and experience.

STATESMEN

OF THE

TIMES OF GEORGE III.

GEORGE III.

THE centre figure round which the others that compose this picture group themselves, and with which they almost all have relations, is that of George III., a prince whose long reign during by far the most important period in the history of the human race, rendered his character and conduct a matter of the deepest interest, not only to the people of his vast dominions, but to all mankind. He presided over the destinies of the British Empire, the only free State in the world, during an age that witnessed the establishment of independence in the new hemisphere, and the extension of liberty over a great portion of the old. He ruled the most enlightened nation of modern times, while civilisation, rapidly spreading in all directions, dispelled the remains of feudal darkness in Europe, carried its light over other quarters of the globe, and discovered and cultivated unknown regions. Wherefore, his capacity, whether to appreciate his position, or to aid in the progress of his people and his species, if he should have the wisdom to choose the right path, or to obstruct it, should he erroneously deem resistance the better course, was a matter of the greatest importance both to himself personally, to the order in which his lot was cast, and to the rest of mankind. Unhappily he took the wrong direction; and, having once taken, persevered in it with the pertinacity that marks little minds of all ranks, but which, in royal understandings, often amounts to a mental disease.

Of a narrow understanding, which no culture had enlarged; of an obstinate disposition, which no education, perhaps, could have humanized; of strong feelings in opinions and predilections, George III. possessed much of the firmness of purpose, which, being exhibited by men of contracted mind without any discrimination, and as pertinaciously when they are in the wrong as when they are in the right, lends to their characters an appearance of inflexible consis-

tency, which is often mistaken for greatness of mind, and not seldom received as a substitute for honesty. In all that related to his kingly office he was the slave of deep-rooted selfishness; and no feeling of a kindly nature was ever allowed access to his bosom, whenever his power was concerned, either in its maintenance, or in the manner of exercising it. In other respects, he was a man of amiable disposition, and few princes have been more exemplary in their domestic habits, or in the offices of private friendship. But the instant that his prerogative was concerned, or his bigotry interfered with, or his will thwarted, the most unbending pride, the most bitter animosity, the most calculating coldness of heart, the most unforgiving resentment, took possession of his whole breast, and swayed it by turns. The habits of friendship, the ties of blood, the dictates of conscience, the rules of honesty, were alike forgotten; and the fury of the tyrant, with the resources of a cunning which mental alienation is supposed to whet, were ready to circumvent or to destroy all who interposed an obstacle to the fierceness of unbridled desire. His conduct throughout the American war, and towards the Irish people, has often been cited as illustrative of the dark side of his public character; and his treatment of his eldest son, whom he hated with a hatred scarcely consistent with the supposition of a sound mind, might seem to illustrate the shadier part of his personal disposition; but it was in truth only another part of his public, his professional conduct; for he had no better reason for this implacable aversion than the jealousy which men have of their successors, and the consciousness that the Prince, who must succeed him, was unlike him, and, being disliked by him, must, during their joint lives, be thrown into the hands of the Whig party, the adversaries he most of all detested and feared.

Although much of the character now portrayed had its origin in natural defect, and part of it in a mind tinged with disease, yet they who had the care of his youth are deeply answerable for the neglect which both added to it many defects, and prevented those of nature from being eradicated or counteracted. His mother, the Dowager Princess, was a woman of neither knowledge, accomplishments, nor abilities. The want of instruction of which George III. could complain must have been great indeed; for if any man was little likely to overrate the value of superfluous information, it was he. Yet a witness, above all suspicion, Sir Herbert Taylor, has recorded that he lamented, while he admitted, his want of education. Can there be a more shameful thing related? Can any parties, in the station of his Royal parent and her favourite, be guilty of a more disgraceful breach of duty than to leave the future monarch of a free and enlightened people without the instruction which all but the lower classes of his subjects give to their children as a matter of course?

Being not deficient in natural quickness, and the more regularly industrious because of his habitually temperate life, he made himself thoroughly master of all the ordinary details of business; insomuch that the same high authority has ascribed to him a more thorough knowledge of the duties of each several department in the State than any other man ever possessed; and this is the testimony of one both singularly accurate in stating facts, and eminently qualified to form such a comparative estimate by his own intimate acquaintance with official details. We must, however, take care not to overrate the difficulty or the value of this acquirement. Kings have a peculiar interest in ascertaining the bounds of each department's duties and rights. They find protection in keeping each within its own limits. Coming, of necessity, into frequent contact with them all, monarchs can easily master the knowledge of their several prerogatives and functions; so that this becomes like heraldry and etiquette, wherein they are all great proficients, emphatically a Royal branch of knowledge. No proofs remain, nor has even any assertion been made, that he had any familiarity with the nobler branches of information connected with state affairs; the constitution and privileges of Parliament; the jurisdiction of Courts; the principles, nay, even the details of banking, or of trade generally; the East India or Colonial Affairs of his Empire; the interests of foreign countries; the statistics of his own; all of them kinds of knowledge as certainly worthy of princes as they are generally despised by them. That he was a diligent man of business, punctual to his appointments, regular in the distribution of his time, never wanting when his mechanical interposition was required, always ready to continue at work until the affair in hand was despatched, nor ever suffering pleasure or distraction of any kind to interfere with the transaction of the matters belonging to his station, is as undeniable as that all this might be predicated of one who had the most limited capacity, or the most confined information, and who had little else to recommend him than the strict sense of his official duties, and the resolution to make everything yield to the discharge of them, those duties being much more of the hand than the head.

But it would be a great mistake to imagine that George III.'s ambition was confined within the range of his abilities. He was impressed with a lofty feeling of his prerogative, and a firm determination to maintain, perhaps extend it. At all events, he was resolved not to be a mere name, or a cipher in public affairs; and, whether from a sense of the obligations imposed upon him by his station, or from a desire to enjoy all its powers and privileges, he certainly, while his reason remained entire, but especially during the earlier period of his reign, interfered in the affairs of government more than any prince who ever sat upon the throne of this country

since our monarchy was distinctly admitted to be a limited one, and its executive functions were distributed among responsible ministers. The correspondence which he carried on with his confidential servants during the ten most critical years of his life lies before us, and it proves that his attention was ever awake to all the occurrences of the government. Not a step was taken in foreign, colonial, or domestic affairs, that he did not form his opinion upon it, and exercise his influence over it. The instructions to ambassadors, the orders to governors, the movements of forces, down to the marching of a single battalion in the districts of this country, the appointments to all offices in church and state, not only the giving away of judgeships, bishoprics, regiments, but the subordinate promotions, lay and clerical; all these form the topics of his letters; on all his opinion is pronounced decisively; on all his will is declared peremptorily. In one letter he decides the appointment of a Scotch puisne judge; in another the march of a troop from Buckinghamshire into Yorkshire; in a third the nomination to the Deanery of Worcester; in a fourth he says that, "if Adam, the architect, succeeds Worsley at the Board of Works, he shall think Chambers ill used." *

For the greater affairs of state it is well known how substantially he insisted upon being the King *de facto* as well as *de jure*. The American war, the long exclusion of the liberal party, the French Revolution, the Catholic question, are all sad monuments of his real power. Of all his resolutions on these affairs, the desire to retain America in subjection seems to have been his strongest propensity; during the whole contest all his opinions, all his feelings, and all his designs, turned upon what he termed the "preservation of the empire." Nor was his rooted prejudice against both the Whigs and the French unconnected with the part they both took in behalf of the Colonies. Rather than quit his hold over those provinces and receive the Whigs into his confidence, or do what he called "submitting to be trampled on by his enemies," he at one time threatened to abdicate, and they who knew him are well aware that he did not threaten without a fixed resolution to act. No less than thrice within four days, in March, 1778, did he use this language in the agony of his mind, at having a junction with the Whig party proposed by his chief minister; and upon one occasion he says, "If the people will not stand by me, they shall have another king, for I never will set my hand to what will make me miserable to the last hour of my life." The threat is revived upon the division against Lord North four years afterwards.

That such a sovereign was, for the servants he confided in, the

* This was in 1777, in the middle of the most anxious moment of the American contest; the letter immediately preceding relates to the sum of affairs.

best possible master, may well be supposed. He gave them his entire and hearty support. If he kept a watchful eye over all the proceedings both of parliament and the country; if we find him one day commenting on the line taken in debate as "dangerous," at another as "timid and vacillating," or discussing the composition of the majority or its numbers upon the division, or suggesting that the journey of Mr. Fox to Paris should "make the different departments bring on all their business before he comes back, as we shall have much less noise for the next three weeks;" or expressing his conviction that "the Speaker's illness is feigned, and all to let the opposition have their pleasure at Newmarket;" he also asks, "Who deserted you last night that you thought you had a right to count upon? Give me their names, that I may mark my sense of their behaviour at the drawing-room to morrow;" and again, "if the utmost obsequiousness on my part at the levee to-day, can gain over Mr. Solicitor-General to your views, it shall not be wanting." This was, indeed, efficiently supporting a favourite ministry; and when he had one forced upon him, his whole conduct was the reverse; all his countenance being given to their antagonists, until the moment arrived when he could safely throw them out.

The first impression which such conduct makes is unfavourable to the monarch, and at first sight even gives rise to an opinion that it was unconstitutional. But further reflection makes this somewhat more than doubtful. The question is, "Does the king of this country hold a real or only a nominal office? Is he merely a form, or is he a substantive power in our mixed and balanced constitution?" Some maintain, nay, it is a prevailing opinion among certain authorities of no mean rank, that the sovereign, having chosen his ministers, assigns over to them the whole executive power. They treat him as a kind of trustee for a temporary use, to preserve, as it were, some contingent estate; or a provisional assignee, to hold the property of an insolvent for a day, and then divest himself of the estate by assigning it over. They regard the only power really vested in the crown to be the choice of ministers, and even the exercise of this to be controlled by the parliament. They reduce the king more completely to the condition of a state pageant or state cipher than one of Abbé Sieyes's constitutions did, when he proposed to have a Grand Functionary with no power except to give away offices; upon which Napoleon, then first consul, to whom the proposition was tendered, asked if it well became him to be made a "Cochon à l'éngrais, à la somme de trois millions par an?"* The English animal, according to the Whig doctrine, much more nearly answers this somewhat coarse description; for the Abbé's plan was to give his royal beast a

* A hog to be fatted at the rate of 120,000*l.* a year.

substantial voice in the distribution of all patronage; while our lion is only to have the sad prerogative of naming whomsoever the parliament chooses, and eating his own mess in quiet.

Now, with all the disposition in the world to desire that Royal prerogative should be restricted, and the will of the nation govern the national affairs, we cannot comprehend this theory of a monarchy. It assigns to the Crown either far too much revenue, or far too little power. To pay a million a-year, or more, for a name, seems absurdly extravagant. To affect living under a kingly government, and yet suffer no kind of kingly power, seems extravagantly absurd. Surely the meaning of having a sovereign is, that his voice should be heard, and his influence felt, in the administration of public affairs. The different orders of the state have a right to look towards that high quarter all in their turn for support when their rights are invaded by one another's encroachments, or to claim the Royal umpirage when their mutual conflicts cannot be settled by mutual concessions; and unless the whole notion of a fixed monarchy, and a balance of three powers, is a mere fiction and a dream, the royal portion of the composition must be allowed to have some power to produce some effect upon the quality of the whole. It is not denied that George III. sought to rule too much; it is not maintained that he had a right to be perpetually sacrificing all other considerations to the preservation or extension of his prerogative. But that he only discharged the duty of his station by thinking for himself, acting according to his conscientious opinion, and using his influence for giving these opinions effect, cannot be denied unless by those who, being averse to monarchies and yet dreading a commonwealth, would incur all the cost, and all the far worse evils, of a form of government which they think the worst, rather than seek for a better, and would purchase the continuance of the greatest evils at the highest price, rather than encounter the risk of a change.*

That this prince in his private life had many virtues, we have already stated, with the qualification annexed of these being always, even as regarded his strong domestic affections, kept in subjection to his feelings as a sovereign. With regard to his general disposition, it must be added that he belonged to a class of men, not by any means the worst, but far beneath the best, in the constitution of their hearts, those who neither can forget a kindness nor an injury. Nor can this sketch be more appropriately closed than with two

* George III. set one example which is worthy of imitation in all times. He refused to be made a state puppet in his minister's hands, and to let his name be used either by men whom he despised, or for purposes which he disapproved. Nor could any one ever accuse him of ruling by favourites; still less could any one, by pretending to be the people's choice, impose himself on his vigorous understanding.

remarkable examples of the implacable hatred he bore his enemies, and the steady affection with which he cherished his friends.

Among the former, Lord Chatham held the most conspicuous place, apparently from the time of the American question; for at an earlier period his correspondence with that great man was most friendly. But the following is his answer to Lord North's proposal that Lord Chatham's pension should be settled in reversion on his younger son, afterwards so well known as the second William Pitt. It bears date August 9th, 1775. "The making Lord Chatham's family suffer for the conduct of their father is not in the least agreeable to my sentiments. But I should choose to know him to be totally unable to appear again on the public stage before I agree to any offer of that kind, lest it should be wrongly construed into a fear of him; and indeed his political conduct the last winter was so abandoned, that he must, in the eyes of the dispassionate, have totally undone all the merit of his former conduct. As to any gratitude to be expected from him or his family, the whole tenor of their lives has shown them void of that most honourable sentiment. But *when decrepitude or death puts an end to him as a trumpet of sedition*, I shall make no difficulty in placing the second son's name instead of the father's, and making up the pension 3000*l*."

From the truly savage feelings which this letter displays, it is agreeable to turn the eye upon so amiable a contrast as the following affords, written to the minister whom he ever loved beyond all his other servants, and only quitted when the Coalition united him to the Whigs:—

"Having paid the last arrears (Sept. 1777) on the Civil List, I must now do the same for you. I have understood, from your hints, that you have been in debt ever since you settled in life. I must therefore insist that you allow me to assist you with 10,000*l*., or 15,000*l*., or even 20,000*l*., if that will be sufficient. It will be easy for you to make an arrangement, or at proper times to take up that sum. You know me very ill if you think not that, of all the letters I ever wrote to you, this one gives me the greatest pleasure; and I want no other return but your being convinced that I love you as well as a man of worth, as I esteem you as a minister. Your conduct at a critical moment I never can forget."

These remarkable and characteristic letters naturally introduce to us his two celebrated correspondents, Lord Chatham and Lord North; the one, until Mr. Fox came upon the stage, of all his adversaries, the one he pursued with the most unrelenting hatred; the other, of all his servants, the one for whom he felt the warmest friendship.

LORD CHATHAM.

THERE is hardly any man in modern times, with the exception, perhaps, of Lord Somers, who fills so large a space in our history, and of whom we know so little, as Lord Chatham; and yet he is the person to whom every one would at once point, if desired to name the most successful statesman and most brilliant orator that this country ever produced. Of Lord Somers, indeed, we can scarcely be said to know anything at all. That he was a person of unimpeachable integrity, a judge of great capacity and learning, a firm friend of liberty, but a cautious and safe counsellor in most difficult emergencies, all are ready to acknowledge. But the authority which he possessed among his contemporaries, the influence which his sound and practical wisdom exercised over their proceedings, the services which he was thus enabled to render in steering the constitution safe through the most trying times, and saving us from arbitrary power without paying the price of our liberties in anarchy and bloodshed, —nay, conducting the whole proceedings of a revolution with all the deliberation, and almost in the forms, of an ordinary legal proceeding; have surrounded his name with a mild yet imperishable glory, which, in the contrast of our dark ignorance respecting all the particulars and details of his life, gives the figure something altogether mysterious and ideal. It is now unfortunately too late, by supplying this information, to fill up the outline which the meagre records of his times have left us. But it is singular how much of Lord Chatham, who flourished within the memory of the present generation, still rests upon vague tradition. As a statesman, indeed, he is known to us by the events which history has recorded to have happened under his administration. Yet even of his share in bringing these about, little has been preserved of detail. So, fragments of his speeches have been handed down to us, but these bear so very small a proportion to the prodigious fame which his eloquence has left behind it, that far more is manifestly lost than has reached us; while of his written compositions but a few letters have hitherto been given to the world.

The imperfect state of Parliamentary Reporting is the great cause of this blank. From the time of his entering the House of Commons to that of his quitting it, the privileges of Parliament almost wholly precluded the possibility of regular and full accounts of debates being communicated to the public. At one period they were given under feigned names, as if held in the Senate of Rome by the ancient orators and statesmen; at another they were conveyed under the initials

only of the names borne by the real speakers. Even when, somewhat later, these disguises were thrown aside, the speeches were composed by persons who had not been present at the debates, but gleaned a few heads of each speaker's topics from some one who had heard him; and the fullest and most authentic of all those accounts are merely the meagre outline of the subjects touched upon, preserved in the Diaries or Correspondence of some contemporary politicians, and presenting not even an approximation to the execution of the orators. Thus many of Lord Chatham's earlier speeches in the House of Commons, as now preserved, were avowedly the composition of Dr. Johnson, whose measured style, formal periods, balanced antitheses, and total want of pure racy English, betray their author at every line, while each debater is made to speak exactly in the same manner. For some years after he ceased to report, or rather to manufacture, that is, from 1751 downwards, a Dr. Gordon furnished the newspapers with reports, consisting of much more accurate accounts of what had passed in debate, but without pretending to give more than the mere substance of the several speeches. The debates upon the American Stamp Act, in 1764, are the first that can be said to have been preserved at all, through the happy accident of Lord Charlemont, assisted by Sir Robert Deane, taking an extraordinary interest in the subject as bearing upon the grievances of Ireland; and accordingly they have handed down to us some notes, from internal evidence plainly authentic, of Lord Chatham's celebrated speeches upon that question. A few remains of his great displays in the House of Lords have, in like manner, been preserved, chiefly in the two speeches reported by Mr. Hugh Boyd; the second of which, the most celebrated of all, upon the employment of the Indians in the American war, there is reason to believe was revised and corrected by Lord Chatham himself; and if so, it was certainly the only one that ever underwent his revision. If any one will only compare the extreme slenderness of these grounds upon which to estimate a speaker's claim to renown, or to judge of the characteristics of his eloquence, with the ample means which we have of studying the merits of almost all the ancient orators, and examining their distinguishing qualities, he will be sensible how much any idea which we can form of Lord Chatham's oratory must rest upon tradition, that is, upon the accounts left by contemporary writers of its effects; and how little we are enabled to judge for ourselves by examining the specimens that remain of his composition. It seems little short of presumption, after this statement, to attempt including his character as an orator in the sketch which may be given of this great man. But the testimony of contemporaries may so far be helped by what remains of the oratory itself, as to make some faint conceptions at-

tainable of that eloquence which, for effect at least, has surpassed any known in modern times.

The first place among the great qualities which distinguished Lord Chatham, is unquestionably due to firmness of purpose, resolute determination in the pursuit of his objects. This was the characteristic of the younger Brutus, as he said, who had spared his life to fall by his hand—*Quicquid vult, id valde vult;* and although extremely apt to exist in excess, it must be admitted to be the foundation of all true greatness of character. Everything, however, depends upon the endowments in company of which it is found; and in Lord Chatham these were of a very high order. The quickness with which he could ascertain his object, and discover his road to it, was fully commensurate with his perseverance and his boldness in pursuing it; the firmness of grasp with which he held his advantage was fully equalled by the rapidity of the glance with which he discovered it. Add to this, a mind eminently fertile in resources; a courage which nothing could daunt in the choice of his means; a resolution equally indomitable in their application; a genius, in short, original and daring, which bounded over the petty obstacles raised by ordinary men —their squeamishness and their precedents, and their forms and their regularities—and forced away its path through the entanglements of this base undergrowth to the worthy object ever in view, the prosperity and the renown of his country. Far superior to the paltry objects of a grovelling ambition, and regardless alike of party and of personal considerations, he constantly set before his eyes the highest duty of a public man, to further the interests of his species. In pursuing his course towards that goal, he disregarded alike the frowns of powers and the gales of popular applause, exposed himself undaunted to the vengeance of the Court while he battled against its corruptions, and confronted, unappalled, the rudest shocks of public indignation, while he resisted the dictates of pernicious agitators, and could conscientiously exclaim, with an illustrious statesman of antiquity, "Ego hoc animo semper fui ut invidiam virtute partam, gloriam non invidiam putarem!"

Nothing could be more entangled than the foreign policy of this country at the time when he undertook the supreme direction of her affairs; nothing could be more disastrous than the aspect of her fortunes in every quarter of the globe. With a single ally in Europe, the King of Prussia, and him beset by a combination of all the continental powers in unnatural union to effect his destruction; with an army of insignificant amount, and commanded by men only desirous of grasping at the emoluments, without doing the duties or incurring the risks of their profession; with a navy that could hardly keep the sea, and whose chiefs vied with their comrades on shore in

earning the character given them by the new Minister,—of being utterly unfit to be trusted in any enterprise accompanied with the least appearance of danger; with a generally prevailing dislike of both services, which at once repressed all desire of joining either, and damped all public spirit in the country, by extinguishing all hope of success, and even all love of glory—it was hardly possible for a nation to be placed in circumstances more inauspicious to military exertions; and yet war raged in every quarter of the world where our dominions extended, while the territories of our only ally, as well as those of our own sovereign in Germany, were invaded by France, and her forces by sea and land menaced our shores. In the distant possessions of the Crown the same want of enterprise and of spirit prevailed. Armies in the West were paralysed by the inaction of a Captain who would hardly take the pains of writing a despatch to chronicle the nonentity of his operations; and in the East, while frightful disasters were brought upon our settlements by Barbarian powers, the only military capacity that appeared in their defence was the accidental display of genius and valour by a merchant's clerk, who thus raised himself to celebrity.* In this forlorn state of affairs, which rendered it as impossible to think of peace, as hopeless to continue the yet inevitable war, the base and sordid views of politicians kept pace with the mean spirit of the military caste; and parties were split or united, not upon any difference or agreement of public principle, but upon mere questions of patronage and of share in the public spoil, while all seemed alike actuated by one only passion, the thirst alternately of power and of gain.

As soon as Mr. Pitt took the helm, the steadiness of the hand that held it was instantly felt in every motion of the vessel. There was no more of wavering counsels, of torpid inaction, of listless expectancy, of abject despondency. His firmness gave confidence, his spirit roused courage, his vigilance secured exertion, in every department under his sway. Each man, from the first Lord of the Admiralty down to the most humble clerk in the Victualling Office —each soldier, from the Commander-in Chief to the most obscure contractor or commissary—now felt assured that he was acting or was indolent under the eye of one who knew his duties and his means as well as his own, and who would very certainly make all defaulters, whether through misfeasance or through nonfeasance, accountable for whatever detriment the commonwealth might sustain at their hands. Over his immediate coadjutors his influence swiftly obtained an ascendant which it ever after retained uninterrupted. Upon his first proposition for changing the conduct of the war, he stood single among his colleagues and tendered his resignation should they persist in their dissent;

* Mr. Clive, afterwards Lord Clive.

they at once succumbed, and from that hour ceased to have an opinion of their own upon any branch of the public affairs. Nay, so absolutely was he determined to have the control of those measures, of which he knew the responsibility rested upon him alone, that he insisted upon the first Lord of the Admiralty not having the correspondence of his own department; and no less eminent a naval character than Lord Anson, as well as his junior Lords, was obliged to sign the naval orders issued by Mr. Pitt, while the writing was covered over from their eyes!

The effects of this change in the whole management of the public business, and in all the plans of the Government, as well as in their execution, were speedily made manifest to the world. The German troops were sent home, and a well-regulated militia being established to defend the country, a large disposable force was distributed over the various positions whence the enemy might be annoyed. France, attacked on some points, and menaced on others, was compelled to retire from Germany, soon afterwards suffered the most disastrous defeats, and, instead of threatening England and her allies with invasion, had to defend herself against attack, suffering severely in several of her most important naval stations. No less than sixteen islands, and settlements, and fortresses of importance, were taken from her in America, and Asia, and Africa, including all her West Indian colonies, except St. Domingo, and all her settlements in the East. The whole important province of Canada was likewise conquered; and the Havannah was taken from Spain. Besides this, the seas were swept clear of the fleets that had so lately been insulting our colonies, and even our coasts. Many general actions were fought and gained; one among them the most decisive that had ever been fought by our navy. Thirty-six sail of the line were taken or destroyed; fifty frigates; forty-five sloops of war. So brilliant a course of uninterrupted success had never, in modern times, attended the arms of any nation carrying on war with other states equal to it in civilisation, and nearly a match in power. But it is a more glorious feature in this unexampled Administration which history has to record, when it adds, that all public distress had disappeared; that all discontent in any quarter, both of the colonies and parent state, had ceased; that no oppression was anywhere practised, no abuse suffered to prevail; that no encroachments were made upon the rights of the subject, no malversation tolerated in the possessors of power; and that England, for the first time and for the last time, presented the astonishing picture of a nation supporting without murmur a widely-extended and costly war, and a people, hitherto torn with conflicting parties, so united in the service of the commonwealth that the voice of faction had ceased in the land, and any discordant whisper was heard no more. "These" (said the son of his first and most formi-

dable adversary, Walpole, when informing his correspondent abroad, that the session, as usual, had ended without any kind of opposition or even of debate),—"These are the doings of Mr. Pitt, and they are wondrous in our eyes!"

To genius irregularity is incident, and the greatest genius is often marked by eccentricity, as if it disdained to move in the vulgar orbit. Hence he who is fitted by his nature, and trained by his habits, to be an accomplished "pilot in extremity," and whose inclinations carry him forth "to seek the deep when the waves run high," may be found, if not "to steer too near the shore," yet to de[illegible]e the sunken rocks which they that can only be trusted in calm weather would have more surely avoided. To this rule it cannot be said that Lord Chatham afforded any exception; and although a plot had certainly been formed to eject him from the Ministry, leaving the chief control of affairs in the feeble hands of Lord Bute, whose only support was Court favour, and whose chief talent lay in an expertness at intrigue, yet there can be little doubt that this scheme was only rendered practicable by the hostility which the great Minister's unbending habits, his contempt of ordinary men, and his neglect of every-day matters, had raised against him among all the creatures both of Downing-street and St. James's. In fact, his colleagues, who necessarily felt humbled by his superiority, were needlessly mortified by the constant display of it; and it would have betokened a still higher reach of understanding, as well as a purer fabric of patriotism, if he, whose great capacity threw those subordinates into the shade, and before whose vigour in action they were sufficiently willing to yield, had united a little suavity in his demeanour with his extraordinary powers, nor made it always necessary for them to acknowledge as well as to feel their inferiority. It is certain that the insulting arrangement of the Admiralty, to which reference has been already made, while it lowered that department in the public opinion, rendered all connected with it his personal enemies; and, indeed, though there have since his days been Prime Ministers whom he would never have suffered to sit even as puisnè lords at his boards, yet were one like himself again to govern the country, the Admiralty chief, who might be far inferior to Lord Anson, would never submit to the humiliation inflicted upon that gallant and skilful captain. Mr. Pitt's policy seemed formed upon the assumption that either each public functionary was equal to himself in boldness, activity, and resource, or that he was to preside over and animate each department in person. Such was his confidence in his own powers, that he reversed the maxim of governing, never to force your way where you can win it; and always disdained to insinuate where he could dash in, or to persuade where he could command. It thus happened that his colleagues were but nominally coadjutors, and though they durst not

thwart him, yet tendered no heart-service to aid his schemes. Indeed it has clearly appeared since his time that they were chiefly induced to yield him implicit obedience, and leave the undivided direction of all operations in his hands, by the expectation that the failure of what they were wont to sneer at as "Mr. Pitt's visions" would turn the tide of public opinion against him, and prepare his downfall from a height of which they felt that there was no one but himself able to dispossess him.

The true test of a great man—that at least which must secure his place among the highest order of great men—is his having been in advance of his age. This it is which decides whether or not he has carried forward the grand plan of human improvement; has conformed his views and adapted his conduct to the existing circumstances of society, or changed those so as to better its condition; has been one of the lights of the world, or only reflected the borrowed rays of former luminaries, and sat in the same shade with the rest of his generation at the same twilight or the same dawn. Tried by this test, the younger Pitt cannot certainly be said to have lived before his time, or shed upon the age to which he belonged the illumination of a more advanced civilisation and more inspired philosophy. He came far too early into public life, and was too suddenly plunged into the pool of office, to give him time for the study and the reflection which can alone open to any mind, how vigorous soever may be its natural constitution, the views of a deep and original wisdom. Accordingly, it would be difficult to glean, from all his measures and all his speeches, anything like the fruits of inventive genius; or to mark any token of his mind having gone before the very ordinary routine of the day, as if familiar with any ideas that did not pass through the most vulgar understandings. His father's intellect was of a higher order; he had evidently, though without much education, and with no science of any kind, yet reflected deeply upon the principles of human action, well studied the nature of men, and pondered upon the structure of society. His reflections frequently teem with the fruits of such meditation, to which his constantly feeble health perhaps gave rise rather than any natural proneness to contemplative life, from whence his taste must have been alien; for he was eminently a man of action. His appeals to the feelings and passions were also the result of the same reflective habits, and the acquaintance with the human heart which they had given him. But if we consider his opinions, though liberal and enlightened upon every particular question, they rather may be regarded as felicitous from their adaptation to the actual circumstances in which he was called upon to advise or to act, than as indicating that he had seen very far into future times, and anticipated the philosophy which further experience should teach to our more advanced age of the world. To take two

examples from the two subjects upon which he had both thought the most, and been the most strenuously engaged in handling practically as a statesman,—our relations with France and with America:—The old and narrow notions of natural enmity with the one, and natural sovereignty over the other, were the guides of his whole opinions and conduct in those great arguments. To cultivate the relations of peace with our nearest neighbour, as the first of blessings to both nations, each being able to do the other most good in amity and most harm in hostility, never appears to have entered into the system of policy enlightened by that fiery soul, which could only see glory or even safety in the precarious and transient domination bestowed by a successful war. To become the fast friends of those colonies which we had planted and long retained under our protecting government, and thus both to profit ourselves and them the more by suffering them to be as independent as we are, was an idea that certainly could not be said once to have crossed his impetuous and uncompromising mind; for it had often been entertained by him, but only to be rejected with indignation and abhorrence, as if the independence of America were the loss of our national existence. Upon all less important questions, whether touching our continental or our colonial policy, his opinion was to the full as sound, and his views as enlarged, as those of any statesman of his age; but it would not be correct to affirm that on those, the cardinal, and therefore the trying, points of the day, he was materially in advance of his own times.

If we turn from the statesman to survey the orator, our examination must be far less satisfactory, because our materials are extremely imperfect, from the circumstances already adverted to. There is indeed hardly any eloquence, of ancient or of modern times, of which so little that can be relied on as authentic has been preserved; unless perhaps that of Pericles, Julius Cæsar, and Lord Bolingbroke. Of the actions of the two first we have sufficient records, as we have of Lord Chatham's; of their speeches we have little that can be regarded as genuine; although, by unquestionable tradition, we know that each of them was second only to the greatest orator of their respective countries;* while of Bolingbroke we only know, from Dean Swift, that he was the most accomplished speaker of his time; and it is related of Mr. Pitt (the younger), that when the conversation rolled upon lost works, and some said they should prefer restoring the books of Livy, some of Tacitus, and some a Latin tragedy, he at once decided for a speech of Bolingbroke.

* Thucydides gives three speeches of Pericles, which he may very possibly have in great part composed for him. Sallust's speech of Cæsar is manifestly the writer's own composition; indeed, it is in the exact style of the one he puts into Cato's mouth, that is, in his own style.

What we know of his own father's oratory is much more to be gleaned from contemporary panegyrics, and accounts of its effects, than from the scanty, and for the most part doubtful, remains which have reached us.

All accounts, however, concur in representing those effects to have been prodigious. The spirit and vehemence which animated its greater passages—their perfect application to the subject-matter of debate—the appositeness of his invective to the individual assailed—the boldness of the feats which he ventured upon—the grandeur of the ideas which he unfolded—the heart-stirring nature of his appeals,—are all confessed by the united testimony of his contemporaries; and the fragments which remain bear out to a considerable extent such representations; nor are we likely to be misled by those fragments, for the more striking portions were certainly the ones least likely to be either forgotten or fabricated. To these mighty attractions was added the imposing, the animating, the commanding power of a countenance singularly expressive; an eye so piercing that hardly any one could stand its glare; and a manner altogether singularly striking, original, and characteristic, notwithstanding a peculiarly defective and even awkward action. Latterly, indeed, his infirmities precluded all action; and he is described as standing in the House of Lords leaning upon his crutch, and speaking for ten minutes together in an under-tone of voice scarcely audible, but raising his notes to their full pitch when he broke out into one of his grand bursts of invective or exclamation. But in his earlier time, his whole manner is represented as having been beyond conception animated and imposing. Indeed the things which he effected principally by means of it, or at least which nothing but a most striking and commanding tone could have made it possible to attempt, almost exceed belief. Some of these sallies are indeed examples of that approach made to the ludicrous by the sublime, which has been charged upon him as a prevailing fault, and represented under the name of *Charlatanerie*,—a favourite phrase with his adversaries, as in later times it has been with the ignorant undervaluers of Lord Erskine. It is related that once in the House of Commons he began a speech with the words "Sugar, Mr. Speaker,"—and then, observing a smile to pervade the audience, he paused, looked fiercely around, and with a loud voice, rising in its notes and swelling into vehement anger, he is said to have pronounced again the word "Sugar!" three times, and having thus quelled the house, and extinguished every appearance of levity or laughter, turned round and disdainfully asked, "Who will laugh at sugar now?" We have the anecdote upon good traditional authority; that it was believed by those who had the best means of knowing Lord Chatham is certain; and this of itself shows their

sense of the extraordinary powers of his manner, and the reach of his audacity in trusting to those powers.

There can be no doubt that of reasoning,—of sustained and close argument,—his speeches had but little. His statements were desultory, though striking, perhaps not very distinct, certainly not at all detailed, and as certainly every way inferior to those of his celebrated son. If he did not reason cogently, he assuredly did not compress his matter vigorously. He was anything rather than a concise or a short speaker; not that his great passages were at all diffuse, or in the least degree loaded with superfluous words, but he was prolix in the whole texture of his discourse, and he was certainly the first who introduced into our senate the practice, adopted in the American war by Mr. Burke, and continued by others, of long speeches,—speeches of two and three hours, by which oratory has gained little, and business less. His discourse was, however, fully informed with matter; his allusions to analogous subjects, and his references to the history of past events, were frequent; his expression of his own opinions was copious and free, and stood very generally in the place of any elaborate reasoning in their support. A noble statement of enlarged views, a generous avowal of dignified sentiments, a manly and somewhat severe contempt for all petty or mean views—whether their baseness proceeded from narrow understanding or from corrupt bias—always pervaded his whole discourse; and, more than any other orator since Demosthenes, he was distinguished by the grandeur of feeling with which he regarded, and the amplitude of survey which he cast upon the subject-matters of debate. His invective was unsparing and hard to be endured, although he was a less eminent master of sarcasm than his son, and rather overwhelmed his antagonist with the burst of words and vehement indignation, than wounded him by the edge of ridicule, or tortured him with the gall of bitter scorn, or fixed his arrow in the wound by the barb of epigram. These things seemed, as it were, to betoken too much labour and too much art—more labour than was consistent with absolute scorn—more art than could stand with heartfelt rage, or entire contempt inspired by the occasion, at the moment, and on the spot. But his great passages, those by which he has come down to us, those which gave his eloquence its peculiar character, and to which its dazzling success was owing, were as sudden and unexpected as they were natural. Every one was taken by surprise when they rolled forth—every one felt them to be so natural, that he could hardly understand why he had not thought of them himself, although into no one's imagination had they ever entered. If the quality of being natural without being obvious is a pretty correct description of felicitous expression, or what is called fine writing, it is a yet more accurate representation

of fine passages, or felicitous *hits* in speaking. In these all popular assemblies take boundless delight; by these above all others are the minds of an audience at pleasure moved or controlled. They form the grand charm of Lord Chatham's oratory; they were the distinguishing excellence of his great predecessor, and gave him at will to wield the fierce democratie of Athens, and to fulmine over Greece.

It was the sagacious remark of one of the most acute of critics,* as well as historical inquirers, that criticism never would be of any value until critics cited innumerable examples. In sketching the character of Lord Chatham's oratory this becomes the more necessary, that so few now living can have any recollection of it, and that all our knowledge of its peculiar nature rests upon a few scattered fragments. There is, however, some security for our deducing from these a correct notion of it, because they certainly, according to all accounts, were the portions of his discourse which produced the most extraordinary effect, on which its fame rests, and by which its quality is to be ascertained. A few of these may, therefore, be referred to in closing the present imperfect outline of this great man's eloquence.

His remark on confidence, when it was asked by the ministry of 1766, for whom he had some forbearance rather than any great respect, is well known. He said their characters were fair enough, and he was always glad to see such persons engaged in the public service; but, turning to them with a smile, very courteous, but not very respectful, he said—"Confide in you? Oh no—you must pardon me, gentlemen—*youth* is the season of credulity—confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom!"

Some one, having spoken of "the obstinacy of America," said "That she was almost in open rebellion." Mr. Pitt exclaimed, "I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to let themselves be made slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest!"—Then, speaking of the attempt to keep her down—"In a just cause of quarrel you may crush America to atoms; but in this crying injustice!" (Stamp Act)—"I am one who will lift up my hands against it.—In such a cause even your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man; she would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace—to sheath the sword, not in its scabbard, but in the bowels of your countrymen?"—It was in this debate that Mr. Burke first spoke, and Mr. Pitt praised his speech in very flattering terms.

"Those iron barons (for so I may call them when compared with

* Hume—Essays.

the silken barons of modern days) were the guardians of the people; and three words of their barbarous Latin, *nullus liber homo*, are worth all the classics. Yet their virtues were never tried in a question so important as this." (The Pretension of Privilege in the House of Commons)—"A breach is made in the Constitution—the battlements are dismantled—the citadel is open to the first invader—the walls totter—the place is no longer tenable—what then remains for us but to stand foremost in the breach, to repair it, or to perish in it?—Unlimited power corrupts the possessor; and this I know, that where law ends, there tyranny begins."

In reference to the same subject, the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes, he exclaimed in a subsequent debate—"The Constitution at this moment stands violated. If the breach be effectually repaired, the people will return to tranquillity of themselves. If not, let discord reign for ever!—I know to what point my language will appear directed. But I have the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without fear or reserve. Rather than the Constitution should be tamely given up, and our birthright be surrendered to a despotic Minister, I hope, my Lords, old as I am, that I shall see the question brought to an issue, and fairly tried between the people and the Government."—Again he said—"Magna charta—the Petition of Right—the Bill of Rights—form the Bible of the English Constitution. Had some of the King's unhappy predecessors trusted less to the Commentary of their advisers, and been better read in the Text itself, the glorious Revolution might have remained only possible in theory, and their fate would not now have stood upon record, a formidable example to all their successors."—"No man more than I respects the just authority of the House of Commons—no man would go farther to defend it. But beyond the line of the Constitution, like every exercise of arbitrary power, it becomes illegal, threatening tyranny to the people, destruction to the state. Power without right is the most detestable object that can be offered to the human imagination; it is not only pernicious to those whom it subjects, but works its own destruction. *Res detestabilis et caduca.* Under pretence of declaring law, the Commons have made a law, a law for their own case, and have united in the same persons the offices of legislator and party and judge."

These fine passages, conveying sentiments so noble and so wise, may be read with advantage by the present House of Commons when it shall again be called on to resist the Judges of the land, and to break its laws, by opening a shop for the sale of libels.

His character—drawn, he says, from long experience—of the Spaniards, the high-minded chivalrous Castilians, we believe to be as just as it is severe. Speaking of the affair of Falkland's Island, he said,—"They are as mean and crafty as they are insolent and

proud. I never yet met with an instance of candour or dignity in their proceedings; nothing but low cunning, artifice, and trick. I was compelled to talk to them in a peremptory language. I submitted my advice for an immediate war to a trembling council. You all know the consequences of its being rejected."—The speech from the throne had stated that the Spanish Government had disowned the act of its officer. Lord Chatham said—"There never was a more odious, a more infamous falsehood imposed on a great nation. It degrades the King, it insults the Parliament. His Majesty has been advised to affirm an absolute falsehood. My Lords, I beg your attention, and I hope I shall be understood when I repeat, that it is an absolute, a palpable falsehood. The King of Spain disowns the thief, while he leaves him unpunished, and profits by his theft. In vulgar English, he is the receiver of stolen goods, and should be treated accordingly." How would all the country, at least all the canting portion of it, resound with the cry of "Coarse! vulgar! brutal!" if such epithets and such comparisons as these were used in any debate now-a-days, whether among the "silken barons," or the "squeamish Commons" of our time!

In 1775 he made a most brilliant speech on the war. Speaking of General Gage's inactivity, he said it could not be blamed; it was inevitable. "But what a miserable condition," he exclaimed, "is ours, where disgrace is prudence, and where it is necessary to be contemptible! You must repeal these acts," (he said, alluding to the Boston Ports and Massachusetts Bay Bills), "and you WILL repeal them. I pledge myself for it, that you will repeal them. I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed." Every one knows how true this prophecy proved. The concluding sentence of the speech has been often cited,—"If the ministers persevere in misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown; but I will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."

Again, in 1777, after describing the cause of the war and "the traffic and barter driven with every little pitiful German Prince that sells his subjects to the shambles of a foreign country," he adds, "The mercenary aid on which you rely irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of your enemies, whom you overrun with the sordid sons of rapine and of plunder, devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty! If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms, never! never! never!" Such language, used in the modern days of ultra loyalty and extreme decorum, would call down upon his head who employed it the charge

of encouraging rebels, and partaking as an accomplice in their treasons.

It was upon this memorable occasion that he made the famous reply to Lord Suffolk, who had said, in reference to employing the Indians, that "We were justified in using all the means which God and nature had put into our hands." The circumstance of Lord Chatham having himself revised this speech, is an inducement to insert it here at length.

"I am astonished," exclaimed Lord Chatham, as he rose, "shocked, to hear such principles confessed, to hear them avowed, in this House or in this country; principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian.

"My Lords, I did not intend to have trespassed again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation. I feel myself impelled by every duty. My Lords, we are called upon, as members of this House, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions, standing near the throne, polluting the ear of majesty. *That God and nature put into our hands!*—I know not what idea that Lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife, to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating; literally, my Lords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles! Such horrible notions shock every precept of religion, divine and natural, and every generous feeling of humanity; and, my Lords, they shock every sentiment of honour; they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity.

"These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand most decisive indignation. I call upon that Right Reverend Bench, those holy ministers of the Gospel, and pious pastors of the Church: I conjure them to join in the holy work, and to vindicate the religion of their God. I appeal to the wisdom and the law of this Learned Bench, to defend and support the justice of their country. I call upon the Bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn, upon the learned Judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honour of your Lordships to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country to vindicate the national character. I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble Lord frowns with indignation at THE DISGRACE OF HIS COUNTRY! In vain he led your victorious fleets against the boasted Armada of Spain; in vain he defended and established the honour, the liberties, the religion, the Protestant religion of his country, against the arbitrary cruelties of Popery and the Inquisition, if these more than Popish cruelties and inquisitorial practices are let loose amongst us, to turn forth into our settlements, amongst our ancient connexions, friends, and relations, the merciless cannibal, thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child—to send forth the infidel savage—against whom? Against your Protestant brethren; to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name with these horrible hell-hounds of savage war—*hell-hounds, I say, of savage war.* Spain armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of America, and we improve on the inhuman example of even Spanish cruelty: we turn loose these savage hell-hounds

against our brethren and countrymen in America, of the same language, laws, liberties, and religion, endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity. My Lords, this awful subject, so important to our honour, our constitution, and our religion, demands the most solemn and effectual inquiry; and I again call upon your Lordships, and the united powers of the state, to examine it thoroughly and decisively, and to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy prelates of our religion to do away those iniquities from among us; let them perform a lustration—let them purify this House and this country from this sin.

"My Lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more; but my feelings and my indignation were too strong to have said less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, or have reposed my head on my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such preposterous and enormous principles."*

There are other celebrated passages of his speeches in all men's mouths. His indignant and contemptuous answer to the Minister's boast of driving the Americans before the army—"I might as well think of driving them before me with this crutch!"—is well known. Perhaps the finest of them all is his allusion to the maxim of English law, that every man's house is his castle. "The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail—its roof may shake—the wind may blow through it—the storm may enter—the rain may enter—but the King of England cannot enter!—all his force dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!"

These examples may serve to convey a pretty accurate idea of the peculiar vein of eloquence which distinguished this great man's speeches. It was of the very highest order; vehement, fiery, close to the subject, concise, sometimes eminently, even boldly figurative: it was original and surprising, yet quite natural. To call it argumentative would be an abuse of terms; but it had always a sufficient foundation of reason to avoid any appearance of inconsistency, or error, or wandering from the point. So the greatest passages in the Greek orations were very far from being such as could stand the test of close examination in regard to their argument. Yet would it be hypercritical indeed to object that Demosthenes, in the most celebrated burst of all ancient eloquence, argues for his policy being rewarded although it led to defeat, by citing the example of public honours having been bestowed upon those who fell in gaining five great victories.

Some have compared Mr. Fox's eloquence to that of Demosthenes; but it resembled Lord Chatham's just as much, if not more. It was

* There hangs so much doubt upon the charge brought against Lord Chatham, of having himself employed the Indians in the former war, that the subject is reserved for the Appendix.

incomparably more argumentative than either the Greek or the English orator's; neither of whom carried on chains of close reasoning as he did, though both kept close to their subject. It was, however, exceedingly the reverse of the Attic orator's in method, in diction, in conciseness. It had nothing like arrangement of any kind. Except in the more vehement passages, its diction was perhaps as slovenly, certainly as careless as possible, betokening indeed a contempt of all accurate composition. It was diffuse in the highest degree, and abounded in repetitions. While the Greek was concise, almost to being jejune, the Englishman was diffuse, almost to being prolix. How the notion of comparing the two together ever could have prevailed, seems unaccountable, unless it be that men have supposed them alike because they were both vehement, and both kept subject in view rather than run after ornament. But that the most elaborate and artificial compositions in the world should have been likened to the most careless, and natural, and unprepared, that were ever delivered in public, would seem wholly incredible if it were not true. The bursts of Mr. Fox, however, though less tersely and concisely composed, certainly have some resemblance to Lord Chatham's, only that they betray far less fancy, and, however vehement and fiery, are incomparably less bold. Mr. Pitt's oratory, though admirably suited to its purpose, and as perfect a business kind of speaking as ever was heard, certainly resembled none of the three others who have been named. In point of genius, unless perhaps for sarcasm, he was greatly their inferior; although from the unbroken fluency of his appropriate language, and the power of an eminently sonorous voice, he produced the most prodigious effect.

It remains to speak of Lord Chatham as a private man, and he appears to have been in all respects exemplary and amiable. His disposition was exceedingly affectionate. The pride, bordering upon insolence, in which he showed himself encased to the world, fell naturally from him, and without any effort to put it off, as he crossed the threshold of his own door. To all his family he was simple, kindly, and gentle. His pursuits were of a nature that showed how much he loved to unbend himself. He delighted in poetry and other light reading; was fond of music; loved the country; took peculiar pleasure in gardening; and had even an extremely happy taste in laying out grounds. His early education appears to have been further prosecuted afterwards; and he was familiar with the Latin classics, although there is no reason to believe that he had much acquaintance with the Greek. In all our own classical writers he was well versed; and his time was much given to reading them. A correspondence with his nephew, which Lord Grenville published about five and thirty years ago, showed how simple and classical his tastes were, how affectionate his feelings, and how strong his sense

of both moral and religious duty. These letters are reprinted in a work now in the course of publication by the family of Lord Chatham, because the answers have since been recovered; and it contains a great body of other letters both to and from him. Amongst the latter, are to be found constant tokens of his amiable disposition.

The most severe judge of human actions, the critic whose searching eye looks for defects in every portrait, and regards it as a fiction, not a likeness, when he fails to find any, will naturally ask if such a character as Lord Chatham's could be without reproach; if feelings so strong never boiled over in those passions which are dangerous to virtue; if fervour of soul such as his could be at all times kept within the bounds which separate the adjoining provinces of vehemence and intemperance? Nor will he find reason to doubt the reality of the picture which he is scrutinising when we have added the traits that undeniably disfigured it. Some we have already thrown in; but they rather are shades that give effect and relief to the rest, than deformities or defects. It must now be further recorded, that not only was he impracticable, difficult beyond all men to act with, overbearing, impetuously insisting upon his own views being adopted by all as infallible, utterly regardless of other men's opinions when he had formed his own, as little disposed to profit by the lights of their wisdom as to avail himself of their co-operative efforts in action—all this is merely the excess of his great qualities running loose uncontrolled—but he appears to have been very far from sustaining the exalted pitch of magnanimous independence and utter disregard of sublunary interests which we should expect him to have reached and kept as a matter of course, from a more cursory glance at the mould in which his lofty character was cast. Without allowing considerable admixture of the clay which forms earthly mortals to have entered into his composition, how can we account for the violence of his feelings, when George III. showed him some small signs of kindness in the closet, upon his giving up the seals of office. "I confess, Sir, I had but too much reason to expect your Majesty's displeasure. I had not come prepared for this exceeding goodness.—Pardon me, Sir," he passionately exclaimed—"it overpowers—it oppresses me!" and he burst into tears in the presence of one who, as a moment's reflection must have convinced him, was playing a part to undermine his character, destroy his influence, and counteract all his great designs for his country's good. But some misplaced sentiments of loyalty may have produced this strange paroxysm of devotion. The colour assumed by his gratitude for favours conferred upon his family and himself was of a more vulgar hue, and still less harmonised with the Great Commoner's exalted nature. On learning the King's intention to grant him a pension

(in order effectually to undo him), he writes to Lord Bute a letter full of the most humiliating effusions of extravagant thankfulness—speaks of "being confounded with the King's condescension in deigning to bestow one thought on the mode of extending to him his royal beneficence"—considers "any mark of approbation flowing from such a spontaneous source of clemency as his comfort and his glory"—and prostrates himself in the very dust for daring to refuse the kind of provision tendered "by the King in a manner so infinitely gracious"—and proposing, instead of it, a pension for his family. When this prayer was granted, the effusions of gratitude "for these unbounded effects of beneficence and grace which the most benign of Sovereigns has condescended to bestow," are still more extravagant; and "he dares to hope that the same royal benevolence which showers on the unmeritorious such unlimited benefits may deign to accept the genuine tribute of the truly feeling heart with equal condescension and goodness." It is painful to add what truth extorts, that this is really not the sentiment and the language with which a patriot leaves his Sovereign's councils upon a broad difference of honest opinion, and after being personally ill used by that monarch's favourites, but the tone of feeling, and even the style of diction, in which a condemned felon, having sued for mercy, returns thanks when his life has been spared. The pain of defacing any portion of so noble a portrait as Lord Chatham's must not prevent us from marking the traits of a somewhat vulgar, if not a sordid, kind, which are to be found on a closer inspection of the original.

Such was the man whom George III. most feared, most hated, and most exerted his kingcraft to disarm; and such, unhappily, was his momentary success in this long-headed enterprise against the liberties of his people and their champions; for Lord Chatham's popularity, struck down by his pension, was afterwards annihilated by his peerage.

LORD NORTH.

The minister whom George III. most loved was, as has been already said, Lord North, and this extraordinary favour lasted until the period of the Coalition. It is no doubt a commonly-received notion, and was at one time an article of belief among the popular party, that Lord Bute continued his secret adviser after the termination of his short administration; but this is wholly without foundation. The King never had any kind of communication with him,

directly or indirectly; nor did he ever see him but once, and the history of that occurrence suddenly puts the greater part of the stories to flight which are current upon this subject. His aunt, the Princess Amelia, had some plan of again bringing the two parties together, and on a day when George III. was to pay her a visit at her villa of Gunnersbury, near Brentford, she invited Lord Bute, whom she probably had never informed of her foolish intentions. He was walking in the garden when she took her nephew down stairs to view it, saying, there was no one there but an old friend of his, whom he had not seen for some years. He had not time to ask who it might be, when, on entering the garden, he saw his former minister walking up an alley. The King instantly turned back to avoid him, reproved the silly old woman sharply, and declared that, if ever she repeated such experiments, she had seen him for the last time in her house. The assertion that the common reports are utterly void of all foundation, and that no communication whatever of any kind or upon any matter, public or private, ever took place between the parties, we make upon the most positive information, proceeding directly both from George III. and from Lord Bute. But we go farther; the story is contrary to all probability; for that Prince, as well as others of his family, more than suspected the intimacy between his old governor and his royal mother, and, according to the nature of princes of either sex, he never forgave it. The likelihood is, that this came to his knowledge after the period of his first illness, and the Regency Bill which he, in consequence of that circumstance, proposed to parliament; for it is well known that he then had so much regard to the Dowager Princess, as to turn out George Grenville because he passed her over as Regent. Consequently, the discovery which we are supposing him to have made must have been some time after Lord Bute's ministry closed. Certain it is, that the feeling towards him had become, for some reason or other, not neutral, negative, or passive; but such as rules men, and still more princes, when favour is succeeded by dislike; for we may then say what was so wittily observed respecting Louis XV. on a very different occasion—"Il n'y a rien de petit chez les grands." His correspondence with his other ministers, to which we have had access, speaks the same language; a very marked prejudice is constantly betrayed against Scotchmen and Scotch politics.

The origin of Lord North's extraordinary favour was his at once consenting to take the office of prime minister when the Duke of Grafton, in a moment of considerable public difficulty and embarrassment, of what, in those easy days of fair weather, was called danger, suddenly threw up the seals, and retired to his diversions and his mistress at Newmarket. Lord North was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the House of Commons. He had

thus already the most arduous by far of the government duties cast upon him; and his submitting to bear also the nominal functions and real patronage and power of First Lord of the Treasury, seemed but a slender effort of courage or self-devotion. As such, however, the King considered it; nor during the disastrous and really difficult times which his own obstinate bigotry and strong tyrannical propensities brought upon the country, did he ever cease to feel and to testify the lively sense he always felt of the obligation under which Lord North had laid him personally, by coming to his assistance upon that emergency. In fact, responsibility, which to almost all official personages proves the greatest trial, is the most heavily felt, and the most willingly shunned, presses with peculiar weight upon the great public functionary, who by law is wholly exempt from it, and in practice never can know it, unless during the interval between one ministry and another. The less he is in general accustomed to this burthen, the more hard does he find it to bear when he has no minister to cast it upon. Accordingly kings are peculiarly helpless, extremely anxious, and not a little alarmed, when any event has, as they term it, "left them without a government." The relief is proportionably great which they experience when any one, after such an interregnum in times of difficulty, "comes (as they also term it) to their assistance," and "consents to stand by them." This Lord North did for George III. in 1772; and his conduct never was forgotten by that prince. Indeed, the gratitude and personal affection is very remarkable which he showed ever after; at least till the fatal Coalition on which so many political reputations were shipwrecked, and so total a loss was made of both court and popular favour; and it forms one of the not very numerous amiable traits in his character. A striking instance has already been given in speaking of this Monarch.

It must be acknowledged that he was singularly fortunate in the minister whom he thus obtained, and, indeed, in the change which he made. The Duke of Grafton, though a man endowed with many valuable qualities for his high station, remarkable for a liberality on ecclesiastical matters rare in any rank, and any one thing rather than the character painted by the persevering malice and audacious calumnies of Junius, who made him and the Duke of Bedford, together with Lord Mansfield, the choice objects of his unsparing and systematic abuse, was nevertheless of no great weight in debate, and of habits which the aristocratic life in those days had little fitted to meet the unceasing claims of official duty upon a stateman's time and attention. The industry of professional slanderers, too, being counteracted by no brilliant political achievements, had concurred with the discontents prevailing at home, and dissensions yet more formidably showing themselves in the colonies, to lower his reputation in

the country, and to make the task of government such as he plainly shrank from.

The helm thus abandoned, fell into the hands of Lord North, then in the vigour of his faculties, in no respect disadvantageously known to the country, and an undoubted favourite with the House, which for some time he had led. His success there was very considerable. Few men in any station have, indeed, left behind them a higher reputation as a debater, and above all, as the representative of the government. We now speak of his fame after his accession to the chief command in the public councils, as well as the warfare of parliament, had consolidated his authority, exhibited his debating powers, and multiplied his victories. It was his lot to maintain the conflict in times of unprecedented difficulty, and against antagonists such as no minister ever had to meet, if we except Mr. Addington, who was speedily overthrown in the rencounter. The resistance of our whole American empire had ended in a general rebellion, and all the military prowess failed to quell it, as all the political measures of the government had failed to prevent it, or rather had ripened discontent into revolt. A series of political disappointments first, and then of military disasters, had made our American affairs hopeless, when the war extended itself to Europe, and our hitherto invincible navy could not prevent the English coasts and even harbours from being insulted, while our West India islands were ravaged, and our trade in those seas was swept away by the enemy's marine. Nor had the nation the accustomed consolation, and government the usual topic of defence, that our disasters befell us through the proverbially fickle fortune of war and the chances of the elements. Every one failure could be traced to the perverse course of impolicy and injustice combined, in which the colonial revolt took its rise. The Americans, unprepared for resistance, and unwilling to risk it, had been driven on by the tyrannical bigotry which presided over our councils, and for which the King was really answerable, although by the fictions of the constitution his servants only could be blamed. Add to this, that the opposition was led first by Mr. Burke, and afterwards by Mr. Fox, both in the prime of their extraordinary faculties, ranking among their zealous adherents such men as Barrè, Dunning, Lee, supported by the whole phalanx of the Whig aristocracy, and backed always by the prodigious weight of Lord Chatham's authority; occasionally by the exertions of his splendid eloquence, burning brighter than ever as it approached the hour of its extinction. The voice of the people, at first raised against the colonies, soon became loud against the government; and each blunder and each disaster made the storm of public indignation rage more and more violently. Even in point of numbers the parliamentary forces were not so unequally matched as we have seen

them during subsequent seasons of warlike discomfiture; for while Mr. Pitt has had majorities of three or four to one in his support, under all the failures of his continental projects, Lord North was frequently reduced to fight with majorities so scanty, as rather resembled the more recent balance of parliamentary power, than the ordinary workings of our constitution.

Such was the strife, and in such untoward circumstances, which Lord North had to maintain, with the help only of his attorney and solicitor-general, Thurlow and Wedderburne, to whom was afterwards added Dundas. But a weight far more than sufficient to counterbalance this accession was about the same time flung into the opposite scale, and rendered its preponderance still more decided. Mr. Pitt signalized his entrance into Parliament by the most extraordinary eloquence, at once matured and nearly perfect in its kind, and by lending all its aid and all its ornament to the opposition. Nothing daunted, the veteran minister persevered in maintaining the conflict, and was only driven from the helm after he had fought triumphantly for six years against the greater part of the Whig chiefs, and desperately for two more against the whole of the body thus powerfully reinforced.

All contemporary reports agree in representing his talents as having shone with a great and a steady lustre during this singularly trying period. Without any pretensions to fill the higher ranks of eloquence, with no accomplishments of learning beyond the scholarship which a well-educated Englishman gains at Oxford, with political information such as the historical reading of well-informed men could give, he displayed so thorough an acquaintance with official and Parliamentary business as easily supplied all defects in those days of scanty political acquirement, while his clear excellent sense, which never failed him and constantly gave him the victory over men of more brilliant genius; his natural tact, still further improved by practice and deep knowledge of men; his ready fluency; his cool determined courage—would altogether have made him a most accomplished debater, even independent of those peculiar qualities in which he, and indeed all his family, excelled most other men—qualities of singular virtue in any station of either house of Parliament, but in him who holds the first place, of most sovereign efficacy in retaining and rallying his followers, and in conciliating the audience at large—a wit that never failed him, and a suavity of temper that could never be ruffled. Combating his powerful adversaries at such a disadvantage as he, for the most part, was compelled to work up against, from the almost unbroken series of failures which he was called to defend or extenuate, his tactics were greatly admired as well as his gallantry. Nothing perhaps in this way ever showed both skill and boldness more than his unexpectedly granting

a motion for inquiring into the State of the Nation, supposed in parliamentary procedure to be a vote of distrust in the Ministry; for when, to a long and powerful speech introducing that production, he contented himself with making an able and complete reply, and then suddenly professed his full readiness to meet the question in detail, by going at once into the committee, the enemy were taken altogether unprepared, and the whole affair evaporated in smoke.

To give examples of his unbroken good-humour, as enviable as it was amiable, and perhaps still more useful than either, would be to relate the history of almost each night's debate during the American war. The rage of party never was carried to greater excess, nor ever more degenerated into mere personal violence. Constant threats of impeachment, fierce attacks upon himself and all his connexions, mingled execration of his measures and scorn of his capacity, bitter hatred of his person—the elaborate, and dazzling, and learned fancy of Burke, the unbridled licence of invective in which the young blood of Fox nightly boiled over, the epigrams of Barrè, the close reasoning and legal subtlety of Dunning, the broad humour and argumentary sarcasm of Lee—were, without intermission, exhausted upon the minister, and seemed to have no effect upon his habitually placid deportment, nor to consume his endless patience, while they wearied out his implacable antagonists. By a plain homely answer he could blunt the edge of the fiercest declamation or most refined sarcasm; with his pleasantry, never far-fetched, nor ever over-done, or misplaced, or forced, he could turn away wrath and refresh the jaded listeners, while, by his undisturbed temper, he made them believe he had the advantage, and could turn into a laugh, at the assailant's expense, the invective which had been destined to crush himself. On one or two occasions, not many, the correspondence of contemporary writers makes mention of his serenity having been ruffled, as a proof to what excesses of violence the opposition had been carried, but also as an occurrence almost out of the ordinary course of nature. And, truly, of those excesses there needs no other instance be cited than Mr. Fox declaring, with much emphasis, his opinion of the Minister to be such that he should deem it unsafe to be alone with him in a room.

But if it would be endless to recount the triumphs of his temper, it would be equally so and far more difficult to record those of his wit. It appears to have been of a kind peculiarly characteristic and eminently natural; playing easily and without the least effort; perfectly suited to his placid nature, by being what Clarendon says of Charles II., "a pleasant, affable, recommending sort of wit;" wholly unpretending; so exquisitely suited to the occasion that it never failed of effect, yet so readily produced and so entirely unam-

bilious, that although it had occurred to nobody before, every one wondered it had not suggested itself to all. A few only of his sayings have reached us, and these, as might be expected, are rather things which he has chanced to coat over with some sarcasm or epigram that tended to preserve them; they consequently are far from giving an idea of his habitual pleasantry and the gaiety of thought which generally pervaded his speeches. Thus, when a vehement declaimer, calling aloud for his head, turned round and perceived his victim unconsciously indulging in a soft slumber, and, becoming still more exasperated, denounced the Minister as capable of sleeping while he ruined his country—the latter only complained how cruel it was to be denied a solace which other criminals so often enjoyed, that of having a night's rest before their fate. When surprised in a like indulgence during the performance of a very inferior artist, who, however, showed equal indignation at so ill-timed a recreation, he contented himself with observing how hard it was that he should be grudged so very natural a release from considerable suffering; but, as if recollecting himself, added, that it was somewhat unjust in the gentleman to complain of him for taking the remedy which he had himself been considerate enough to administer. The same good-humour and drollery quitted him not when in opposition. Every one has heard of the speech which, if it had failed to injure the objects of its attack, was very effectual in affixing a name upon its honest and much respected author. On Mr. Martin's proposal to have a starling placed near the chair and taught to repeat the cry of "Infamous coalition!" Lord North coolly suggested that, as long as the worthy member was preserved to them, it would be a needless waste of the public money, since the starling might well perform his office by deputy. That in society such a man must have been the most delightful of companions may well be supposed. In his family, and in all his private intercourse as in his personal character, he was known to be in every respect amiable; of scrupulous integrity and unsullied honour.

As a statesman, his merits are confessedly far inferior to those which clothed him as a debater and as a man. The American war is the great blot upon his fame; for his share in the Coalition was only exceptionable on account of the bitterness with which his adversaries had so long pursued him; and if they could submit to the fellowship of one upon whom they had heaped such unmeasured abuse, they seemed to recant, or even to confess that the opinions which they had previously professed of him, they had not really entertained. That ill-fated measure of the Whigs seemed to be rather a tribute of tardy justice to their great adversary, and it was not for him either to reject it or to scrutinize the motives from which it was paid. But the policy towards our colonies, of which he had been

the leading advocate in Parliament, and for which he was primarily responsible as minister, can admit of no defence; nor in his position, and upon so momentous a question, is it possible to urge, even in extenuation of his offending, that he was all along aware of the King's egregious folly, which obstinately persisted in a hopeless and ruinous struggle against the liberties of his people. That this, however, was the fact, there exists no kind of doubt; he was long resolved to quit the helm, because George III. insisted on a wrong course being steered—that helm which he ought to have quitted as soon as his mind was made up to differ with the owner of the vessel, unless he were permitted to follow his own course; and he was only kept at his post by constant entreaties, by monthly expostulations, by the most vehement protestations of the misguided Prince against a proceeding which must leave him helpless in the hands of his implacable enemies, and even by promises always renewed to let him go would he but remain for a few weeks, until some other arrangement could be made. It is fit that this certain and important fact should be stated; and we have before us the proofs of it under the hand of the Royal Suitor to his reluctant servant's grace and favour, whose apparently fixed purpose of retirement, he uses all these expedients to defeat, or at least to obstruct and retard, if he cannot frustrate. This importunity working upon the feelings of a well-natured person like Lord North, might easily be expected to produce its intended effect; and the unavoidable difficulty of retreating from a post which, while he held it, had become one of peril as well as embarrassment, doubtless increased the difficulty of abandoning it while the danger lasted.

But although we may thus explain, we are not the better enabled to excuse the minister's conduct. When he found that he could no longer approve the policy which he was required to pursue, and of course to defend, he was bound to quit the councils of his obstinate and unreasonable Sovereign. Nor can there be a worse service either to the Prince or his people, than enabling a Monarch to rule in his own person, dictating the commands of his own violence or caprice, through servants who disapprove of his measures, and yet suffer themselves to be made instruments for carrying them into execution. A bad King can desire nothing more than to be served by such persons, whose opinions he will as much disregard as their inclinations, but whom he will always find his tools in doing the work of mischief, because they become the more at the Monarch's mercy in proportion as they have surrendered their principles and their will to his. Far, then, very far from vindicating the conduct of Lord North in this essential point, we hesitate not to affirm that the discrepancy between his sentiments and his measures is not even any extenuation of the disastrous policy which gave us, for the fruits of a

long and disastrous war, the dismemberment of the empire. In truth, what otherwise might have been regarded as an error of judgment, became an offence, only palliated by considering those kindly feelings of a personal kind which governed him, but which every statesman, indeed every one who acts in any capacity as trustee for others, is imperatively called upon to disregard.

While, however, truth requires this statement, justice equally demands that, in thus denouncing his offence, we should mark how very far it is from being a solitary case of political misconduct. Upon how many other great occasions have other ministers sacrificed their principles, not to the good-natured wish that the King might not be disturbed, but to the more sordid apprehension that their own government might be broken up, and their adversaries displace them, if they manfully acted up to their well known and oftentimes recorded opinions? How many of those who, but for this unwelcome retrospect into their own lives, which are thus forcing upon them, would be the very first to pronounce a pharisaical condemnation on Lord North, have adopted the views of their opponents, rather than yield them up their places by courageously and honestly pursuing the course prescribed by their own? Let us be just to both parties: but first to the conductor of the American war, by calling to mind the similar delinquency of some who have succeeded to his power, with capacity of a higher order than his, and of some who resembled him only in their elevation to high office, without his talents to sustain it, or to adorn. The subject, too, has a deeper and more general interest than merely that of dispensing justice among individuals; it concerns the very worst offence of which a minister can be guilty—the abandonment of his own principles for place, and counselling his Sovereign and his country, not according to his conscience, but according to what, being most palatable to them, is most beneficial to the man himself.

Mr. Pitt joining the war party in 1793, the most striking and the most fatal instance of this offence, is the one which at once presents itself; because of all Lord North's adversaries there was none who pursued him with such unrelenting rancour, to the pitch of peremptorilyrefusing all negociations with the Fox party, unless their new ally should be expelled, when he, with a magnanimity rare indeed among statesmen, instantly removed the obstacle to his bitter adversary's elevation, by withdrawing all claims to a share of power. No one more clearly than Mr. Pitt saw the ruinous consequences of the contest into which his new associates, the deserters from the Whig standard, were drawing or were driving him; none so clearly perceived or so highly valued the blessings of peace, as the finance minister, who had but the year before accompanied his reduction of the whole national establishment with a picture of our future pros-

y almost too glowing even for his great eloquence to attempt. rdingly it is well known, nor is it ever contradicted by his few surviving friends, that his thoughts were all turned to peace. But the voice of the court was for war; the aristocracy was for war; the country was not disinclined towards war, being just in that state of excitable (though as yet not excited) feeling which it depended upon the government, that is, upon Mr. Pitt, either to calm down into a sufferance of peace, or rouse into a vehement desire of hostilities. In these circumstances, the able tactician whose genius was confined to parliamentary operations, at once perceived that a war must place him at the head of all the power in the state, and, by uniting with him the more aristocratic portion of the Whigs, cripple his adversaries irreparably; and he preferred flinging his country into a contest which he and his great antagonist by uniting their forces must have prevented; but then he must also have shared with Mr. Fox the power which he was determined to enjoy alone and supreme. This was a far worse offence than Lord North's; although the country, or at least the patrician party, shared with the crown the prejudices to which Mr. Pitt surrendered his own judgment, and the power to reward his welcome conversion. The youngest man living will not survive the fatal effects of this flagrant political crime.

The abandonment of the Catholic question by the same minister when he returned to power in 1804, and the similar sacrifice which the Whigs made at his death to the bigotry of George III., are often cited as examples of the same delinquency. But neither the one nor the other of these passages presents anything like the same aspect with the darker scene of place-loving propensities which we have just been surveying. The marked difference is the state of the war; the great desire which the Pitt party had of conducting hostilities with vigour, and which the Fox party had of bringing them to a close. The more recent history, however, of the same question affords instances more parallel to those of the American and the French wars. When peace was restored, and when even the obstacle to the emancipation presented by George III.'s obstinate bigotry was removed, they who had so long talked the uncouth language, so strange to the constitution of a free country, of yielding to "unhappy prejudices in a high quarter, impossible to be removed," had now no longer any pretext for uttering such sounds as those. The Regent, afterwards the King, had no prejudices which any man, be his nature ever so sensitive, was called on to respect; for he had, up to the illness of his father, been a warm friend to the Catholics. Yet, no sooner did he declare against his former principles, than Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning also declared that his conscience (the scrupulous conscience of George IV.!) must not be forced, and one administration was

formed after another upon the principle of abandoning all principle in order to follow the interests of the parties, and of leaving the domestic peace of the country by common consent out of view. The present state of Ireland, and indeed to a certain degree the unworthy course pursued by their successors on Irish affairs, is the fruit, and the natural fruit, of this wholly unprincipled system.

The subject of Parliamentary Reform affords other illustrations of a like kind. To alter the constitution of parliament as one party termed it, to restore it as another said, but to change its actual structure as all admitted, might be right or it might be wrong; might be necessary for the peace of the country, or might be the beginning of inextricable confusion; but at any rate statesmen were called upon to decide so grave a question upon its own merits—a question by far the most momentous of any that statesmen were in this world ever summoned to discuss in the peaceful deliberations of council, or senators to decide by the weapons of argument alone—a question which, in any other age, perhaps in any other country, must have been determined, not by deliberations of politicians or arguments of orators, but by the swords and the spears of armed combatants. Yet this question has more than once, and by more than one party, been made the subject of compromise, at one time taken up, at another laid down, as suited the convenience rather than the duty of statesmen. Of a certainty, those men have no right to blame Lord North for remaining in office, though disapproving the American war, rather than break up the government and open the doors of Downing-street to the Opposition. In one respect, indeed, Lord North has been by far outdone by them. No exigency of party affairs ever drove him back to the side of the American controversy which he had escaped. But the "Reformers of the Eleventh Hour," having made all the use of their new creed which they well could, took the opportunity of the new reign to cast it off, and, fancying they could now do without it, returned into the bosom of their own church, becoming once more faithful supporters of things as they are, and sworn enemies of reform.

A new and perhaps unexpected vindication of Lord North has been recently presented by the Canadian policy of liberal governments, as far as mistakes by inferior artists can extenuate the failings of their more eminent predecessors. When the senseless folly was stated of clinging by colonies wholly useless and merely expensive, which all admit must sooner or later assert their independence and be severed from the mother-country, none of all this was denied, nor indeed could it: but the answer was, that no government whatever could give up any part of its dominions without being compelled by force, and that history afforded no example of such a surrender without an obstinate struggle. What more did Lord North, and the other

authors of the disgraceful contest with America, than act upon this bad principle?

But a general disposition exists in the present day to adopt a similar course to the one which we have been reprobating in him, and that upon questions of the highest importance. It seems to be demanded by one part of the community, and almost conceded by some portion of our rulers in our days, that it is the duty of statesmen when in office to abdicate the functions of Government. We allude to the unworthy, the preposterous, the shameful, the utterly disgraceful doctrine of what are called "*open questions*." Its infamy and its audacity has surely no parallel. Enough was it that the Catholic Emancipation should have been taken up in this fashion, from a supposed necessity and under the pressure of fancied, nay factitious, difficulties. No one till now ever had the assurance to put forward, as a general principle, so profligate a rule of conduct; amounting indeed to this, that when any set of politicians find their avowed and recorded opinions inconsistent with the holding by office, they may lay them aside, and abdicate the duty of Government while they retain its emoluments and its powers. Mark well, too, that this is not done upon some trivial question, which all men who would act together in one body for the attainment of great and useful objects, may and oftentimes must waive, or settle by mutual concessions—nothing of the kind; it is upon the greatest and most useful of all objects, that the abdication is demanded, and is supposed to be made. Whether Reform shall be final or progressive—whether the Elective Franchise shall be extended or not—whether voting shall be by Ballot or open—whether the Corn Laws shall be repealed or not—such are the points upon which the ministers of the Crown are expected to have exactly no opinion; alone of the whole community to stand mute and inactive, neither thinking, neither stirring,—and to do just precisely neither more nor less than—nothing. It is surely unnecessary to say more. "*The word abdicate*," on which men debated so long one hundred and fifty years ago, is the only word in the dictionary which can suit the case. Can any one thing be more clear than this, that there are questions upon which it is wholly impossible that a Government should not have some opinion, and equally necessary that, in order to deserve the name of a Government, its members should agree? Why are one set of men in office rather than another, but because they agree among themselves, and differ with their adversaries upon such great questions as these? The code of political morality recognizes the *idem sentire de republica* as a legitimate bond of virtuous union among honest men; the *idem velle atque idem nolle*, is also a well known principle of action; but among the associates of Catiline, and by the confession of their profligate leader. Can it be doubted for a

moment of time, that when a government has said, "We can agree on these the only important points of practical policy,"—time is come for so reconstructing and changing it, as that an agreement imperiously demanded by the best interests of the state may be secured? They are questions upon which an opinion must be formed by every man, be he statesman or individual, ruler or subject. Each of the great measures in question is either expedient or it is hurtful. The people have an indisputable right to the help of the Government in furthering it if beneficial, in resisting it if pernicious; and to proclaim that, on these subjects, the governors of the country alone must stand neuter, and leave the questions to their fate, is merely to say that, whensoever it is most necessary to have a Government, we have no Government at all: and why? Because they in whose hands the administration of affairs is vested are resolved rather to keep their places than to do their duty.

A similar view is sometimes put forward and even acted upon, but of so vulgar, so incomparably base a kind, that we hardly know if we should deign to mention it. The partisans of a ministry are wont to say for their patrons, that, unless the country call for certain measures, it shall not have them. What! Is this the duty of rulers? Are men in such stations to give all that may be asked, and only to give because of the asking, without regarding whether it be a boon or a bane? Is the motto of them that hold the citadel to be "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you?"—Assuredly such men as these do not rise even to the mean rank of those disgraced spirits elsewhere, who while in life

——visser senza infamia e senza lodo;

but of them we may at least say as of these,

Non ragionam di lor ma guarda e passa.*

While Lord North led the House of Commons, he had extremely little help from any merely political men of his party. No ministers joined him in defending the measures of his Government. His reliance was upon professional supporters; and Gibbon has described him as slumbering between the great legal Pillars of his administration, his Attorney and Solicitor General, who indeed composed his whole strength, until Mr. Dundas, also a professional supporter, being Lord Advocate of Scotland, became a new and very valuable accession to his forces.

* Dante, Inf.

LORD LOUGHBOROUGH.

Mr. Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough and Earl of Rosslyn, was one of the few eminent lawyers who have shone at the least as much in political affairs as in Westminster Hall. Of those English barristers to whom this remark is applicable, Mr. Perceval was perhaps the most considerable; of men bred at the Scotch bar, and who were promoted in England, Lord Melville: Mr. Wedderburn, in some sort, partook of both kinds, having been originally an advocate in Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself by his eloquence and by the fierceness of his invective, which being directed against a leading member of the bar, ended in a quarrel with the court, led to his removing from the provincial theatre, and ultimately raised him to the English bench. He was a person of great powers, cultivated with much care, and chiefly directed towards public speaking. Far from being a profound lawyer, he was versed in as much professional learning on ordinary subjects as sufficed for the common occasions of *Nisi Prius*. On peerage law, he is believed to have had more knowledge, and the whole subject lies within a very narrow compass. He affected great acquaintance with constitutional learning; but on this doubts were entertained, augmented, certainly, by the unscrupulous manner in which his opinions were at the service of the political parties he successively belonged to. But his strength lay in dealing with facts; and here all his contemporaries represent his powers to have been unrivalled. It was probably this genius for narrative, for arguing upon probabilities, for marshalling and for sifting evidence, that shone so brilliantly in his great speech at the bar of the House of Lords upon the celebrated Douglas cause, and which no less a judge than Mr. Fox pronounced to be the very finest he ever heard on any subject. It must, however, be remarked, in abatement of this high panegyric, that the faculty of statement and of reasoning without the excitement of a contentious debate, being very little possessed by that great man himself, a happy display of it, not so unusual in professional men, might produce a greater impression upon him than was proportioned to its true value and real weight. That it was a prodigious exhibition may nevertheless be admitted to the united testimony of all who recollect it, and who have lived in our own times. That Lord Loughborough never forgot the Douglas cause itself, as he was said to have forgotten so many merely legal arguments in which he, from time to time, had been engaged, appears from one of his judgments in

Chancery, where he imported into a case before him facts not belonging to it, but recollected by him as having been proved in the case of Douglas.

His manner in earlier life was remarked as excellent; and though it probably partook even then of that over precision, which, in his latter years, sometimes bordered upon the ridiculous, it must certainly have been above the common order of forensic delivery to earn the reputation which has remained of it. That he made it an object of his especial care is certain. He is supposed to have studied under a player; and he certainly spared no pains to eradicate his northern accent, beside being exceedingly careful to avoid provincial solœcisms. His efforts were eminently successful in both these particulars; but the force of second nature, habit, will yield to that of Nature herself, who is apt to overcome in the end all violence that cultivation may do her. His Scotticisms and his vernacular tones returned as his vigour was impaired in the decline of life; showing that it was all the while an effort which could not continue when the attention was relaxed and its powers enfeebled.

Upon the removal of Sir Fletcher Norton he joined the Northern Circuit, having then the rank of King's Counsel. As this was contrary to all the rules of the profession, and was, indeed, deemed to be a discreditable proceeding as well as a breach of discipline, even independent of other peculiarities attending the operation*, an immediate resolution was adopted by the Bar to refuse holding briefs with the new-comer; a resolution quite fatal to him, had not Mr. Wallace, a man of undoubted learning and ability, been tempted to break it, and thereby at once to benefit himself and nearly destroy the combination. He thus secured, beside the immediate advantage of professional advancement, the patronage of his leader, who in a few years became Solicitor-General, and afterwards Attorney, under Lord North's administration, drawing Mr. Wallace upwards in his train. He practised in the Court of Chancery; but in those days the line had not been drawn which now, so hurtfully for the Equity practitioner, separates the two sides of Westminster Hall; and Chancery leaders frequented the different circuits almost equally with practitioners in the courts of Common Law.

When he entered the House of Commons he became, in a very short time, one of the two main supports of its ministerial leader: the other was Lord Thurlow; and while they remained there to defend him, Lord North might well, as Gibbon has described the "Palinurus of the state," indulge in slumbers with his Attorney and Solicitor General on either hand, remaining at their posts to watch

* He came there with the same clerk whom Sir F. Norton had before in his service.

out the long debate. No minister before or since the time of Mr. Addington ever depended so much upon the services of his professional supporters. Indeed, they and Mr. Dundas, alone, appear to have shared with him the whole weight of an attack conducted by the powers of an opposition which Burke and Fox led, and aggravated by the uninterrupted series of disasters which, during the whole American contest, attended the councils of the King and his servants.

Of the debates in those days such scanty remains are preserved, that no one could discover from them the qualities, or even the classes of the orators who bore a part in them. The critic cannot from such fragments divine the species and supply the lost parts, as the comparative anatomist can, by the inspection of a few bones in the fossil strata of the globe. Until, therefore, Lord Loughborough came to the House of Lords, indeed until the Regency question occupied that assembly in 1788 and 1789, we were left without the means of assigning his place as a debater. Of his forensic powers we have better opportunities to judge. Several of his arguments are preserved, particularly in the Duchess of Kingston's case, and in one or two causes of celebrity heard before him in the Common Pleas, from which we can form an idea, and it is a very exalted one, of his clearness and neatness of statement, the point and precision of his language, and the force and even fire with which he pressed his argument, or bore down upon an adverse combatant. The effect of his eloquence upon a very favourable audience certainly, and in a season of great public violence and delusion, for it was against the Americans, and before the Privy Council at the commencement of the revolt, are well known. Mr. Fox alluded to it in warning the Commons against being led away by such eloquence as Mr. Pitt had just astonished them with, at the renewal of the war in 1803, reminding them how all men "tossed up their hats and clapped their hands in boundless delight" at Mr. Wedderburn's Privy-Council speech, without reckoning the cost it was to entail upon them. Of this famous display nothing remains but a small portion of his invective against Franklin, which, being couched in epigram, and conveyed by classical allusion, has been preserved, as almost always happens to whatever is thus sheathed. It refers to some letters of a colonial governor, which, it was alleged, had come unfairly into Franklin's hands, and been improperly used by him; and the Solicitor-General's classical wit was displayed in jesting upon that illustrious person's literary character, and calling him a man of three letters, the old Roman joke for a thief! Pity that so sorry a sample of so celebrated an orator should be all that has reached the present time to justify the account given by Mr. Fox of the effects which its delivery produced. We are thus reminded of Swift's allusion to

some statue of Cato, of which nothing remained save the middle region.

That the speech and the whole scene was not without its effect upon him who was the principal object of attack, appears sufficiently certain: for though, at the moment, a magnanimous and, indeed, somewhat overdone, expression of contempt for the speaker is reported to have escaped him in answer to one who hoped, rather clumsily, that he did not feel hurt, "I should think myself meaner than I have been described, if anything coming from such a quarter could vex me;" yet it is well known that, when the ambassadors were met to sign the peace of Versailles, by which the independence of America was acknowledged, Franklin retired, in order to change his dress and affix his name to the treaty in those very garments which he wore when attending the Privy Council, and which he had kept by him for the purpose during many years, a little inconsistently, it must be confessed, with the language of contemptuous indifference used by him at the moment.

When he was raised to the Bench in 1780, and the Special Commission was issued for trying the rioters, he presided, and delivered a charge to the Grand Jury, the subject at the time of much animadversation for its matter, and of boundless panegyric for its execution. It was published and widely circulated under the authority of the learned Judge himself; and we have thus in the first place the means of determining how far the contemporary opinions upon that production itself were well founded, and next how far the admiration excited by the other efforts of the same artist was justly bestowed. Whoever now reads this celebrated charge, will confess that the blame and the praise allotted to it were alike exaggerated. Far from laying down bad law and propagating from the Bench dangerous doctrines respecting treason, the whole legal portion of it consists in a quotation from Judge Foster's book, and a statement in which every lawyer must concur, that the Riot Act never intended to prevent the magistrate from quelling a riot during the hour after proclamation. Then the whole merit of the address in point of execution consists in the luminous, concise, and occasionally impressive sketch of the late riotous proceedings which had given rise to the trials. That this narrative, delivered in a clear and melodious voice, loud without being harsh, recently after the event, and while men's minds were filled with the alarm of their late escape, and with indignation at the cause of their fears, should make a deep impression, and pass current at a standard of eloquence far above the true one, may well be imagined. But so much the more reprehensible (and here lies the true ground of blame) was the conduct of the Judge who could at such a moment take the pains manifested throughout this charge to excite, or rather to keep alive and glowing, those

feelings which the due administration of justice required him rather sedulously to allay. Within a short month after the riots themselves six and forty persons were put upon their trial for that offence; and nearly the whole of the Chief Justice's address consisted of a solemn and stately lecture upon the enormity of the offence, and a denial of whatever could be alleged in extenuation of the offenders' conduct. It resembled far more the speech of an advocate for the prosecution, than the charge of a Judge to the Grand Jury. Again, when we find a composition which all men had united to praise as a finished specimen of oratory, falling to a rather ordinary level, there is some difficulty in avoiding the inference that an abatement should also be made from the great eulogies bestowed upon its author's other speeches, which have not reached us; and we can hardly be without suspicion that much of their success may have been owing to the power of a fine delivery, and a clear voice in setting off inferior matter; to which may be added the never-failing effect of correct composition, if employed either at the bar or in Parliament, where a more slovenly diction is so much more frequent even with the best speakers.

That he was a thoroughly-devoted party man all his life, can indeed no more be questioned than that he owed to the manœuvres of faction much of his success. He did not cease to feel the force of party attachment when he ascended the Bench; and there can be no doubt that his object at all times, even while he sat in the Common Pleas, was to gain that great prize of the profession which he at length reduced into possession. We shall in vain look for any steady adherence to one code of political principles, any consistent pursuit of one undeviating line of conduct, in his brilliant and uniformly successful career. He entered parliament in uncompromising opposition to Lord North's cabinet, and for some years distinguished himself among their most fierce assailants, at a time when no great errors had been committed or any crimes against public liberty or the peace of the world could be laid to their charge. On the eve of the American war he joined them when their measures were becoming daily more indefensible; and it is known that, like many others in similar circumstances, he appeared at first to have lost the power of utterance, so astonished and overcome was he with the plunge which he had made after preferment.* But he soon recovered his faculties, and continued in office the constant and unflinching supporter of all the measures by which his former adversaries converted discontent into disaffection, and out of disaffection raised up revolt; nor did he quit them when they had severed the empire in

* Alluding to this passage of his life, Junius, in his XLIVth Letter, says, "We have seen him in the House of Commons overwhelmed with confusion, and almost bereft of his faculties."

twain. Removed from the strife of the senate and the forum, on the bench he continued their partisan, when they joined in a coalition with their ambitious and unscrupulous enemies. For many years of Mr. Pitt's administration he was the real if not the avowed leader of the Foxite opposition in the House of Lords, as well as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Westminster Hall. He had under the Coalition enjoyed a foretaste of that great banquet of dignity and patronage, emolument and power, on which he had so immoveably fixed his long-sighted and penetrating eye; having been Chief Commissioner of the Great Seal during the short life of that justly unpopular administration. This scanty repast but whetted his appetite the more; and among the more bold and unhesitating of the Prince's advisers upon the question of the Regency, the Chief Justice was to be found the boldest and most unflinching.

No one can, upon a calm review of that famous controversy, entertain any doubt that the strict letter of the constitution prescribed one course, while the manifest considerations of expediency prescribed another. Nothing can be more contrary to the whole frame of a monarchy than allowing the very fundamental principle, that of hereditary descent, for which and its benefits so many strange and even pernicious anomalies are overlooked, such constant risks encountered, and such serious practical inconveniences borne with, to be broken in upon when the sovereign is disabled, whether by infancy or by old age, or by disease, and instead of following the plain course of the succession, to call in the elective voice of the country by an act that resolves the government into its first principles. To make this appeal, and not merely to elect a Regent, but to limit his powers, is in other words to frame a new constitution for the state, which shall last during the monarch's incapacity, and which, if it be fit for the purposes of government, ought assuredly not to be replaced by the old one, when he recovers or attains his perfect powers of action. The phantom of a commission issued by an incapable king to confer upon what the two other branches of the legislature had proposed, the outward semblance of a statute passed by all the three, was an outrage upon all constitutional principle, and, indeed, upon the common sense of mankind, yet more extravagant than the elective nature of the whole process. Nevertheless, there were reasons of a practical description which overbore these obvious considerations, and reconciled men's minds to such an anomalous proceeding. It seemed necessary to provide for the safe custody of the king's person; and for such a sure restoration of his powers as should instantly replace the sceptre in his hand the very moment that his capacity to hold it should return. His Vicegerent must plainly have no control over this operation, neither over the Royal patient's custody, nor over the

resumption of his office, and the termination of his own. But it would not have been very easy to cut off all interference on the Regent's part in this most delicate matter, had he been invested with the full powers of the Crown. So, in like manner, the object being to preserve things as nearly as possible in their present state, if those full powers had been exercised uncontrolled, changes of a nature quite irreversible might have been effected while the Monarch's faculties were asleep; and not only he would have awakened to a new order of things, but the affairs of the country would have been administered under that novel dispensation by one irreconcileably hostile to it, while its author, appointed in the course of nature once more to rule as his successor, would have been living and enjoying all the influence acquired by his accidental, anticipated, and temporary reign. These considerations, and the great unpopularity of the Heir-apparent, and his political associates, the coalition party, enabled Mr. Pitt to carry his proposition of a regency with restricted powers established by a bill to which the two remaining branches alone of the crippled Parliament had assented, instead of their addressing the Heir-apparent, declaring the temporary vacancy of the throne, and desiring him temporarily to fill it. The sudden recovery of the King prevented the experiment from being then fully tried; but it was repeated after great opposition and much discussion in 1810. The two precedents thus made have now settled the constitutional law and practice in this important particular.

The Parliament of Ireland, it is to be remarked, did not, in the earlier case, pursue the same course with that of Great Britain. Our fellow-citizens, althongh dwelling farther from the rising sun, are more devotedly given to its worship than ourselves. They could see nothing of expediency or discretion sufficient to restrain their zeal; and they at once addressed the Prince of Wales to take upon him the Government without any restriction whatever, leaving it to His Royal Highness to make what provision he might deem most convenient for his own dethronement and his father's restoration should he recover. It is the same country which, having some thirty years later been ill-used by the same individual, testified their sense of this treatment by overt acts of idolatry when he went among them at the most justly unpopular period of his life, and even began a subscription for building him a palace, of which, however, not a farthing was ever paid.*

* General censures of a whole nation are generally foolish, and are really of no avail. But if the Irish people would avoid the ill opinion under which they labour among all men of reflection, and raise themselves to the rank of a nation fit for self-government, they must begin to show that they can think for themselves, and not follow blind-folded every delusion, or suffer to be practised upon them every

In the consultations, and in the intrigues to which this crisis gave rise, Lord Loughborough bore a forward part. That he should have agreed with the rest of the party in the constitutional view which they took of the question, could excite no surprise, nor give rise to any comment. But it is well known that his views were of a more practical nature than any which appeared in the debate. Bold, determined, unscrupulous, he recommended in council a course which nothing but the courage derived from desperation could have made any English Statesmen in the eighteenth century take into their serious consideration, and which if it had been pursued would have left the odium attached to the Coalition in the shade, and made the people of this country repent them of not having detested the parties to it yet more bitterly and more universally. It was the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice, that the Prince of Wales should not have waited for even an address of the two houses; but, considering them as nonentities while the throne was empty, should at once have proceeded to restore, as it was delicately and daintily termed, the executive branch of the constitution; in other words, proclaim himself regent, and issue his orders to the troops and the magistrates, as if his father were naturally dead, and he had succeeded, in the course of nature, to the vacant crown. There is no reason to believe that this scheme of Lord Loughborough was adopted by the chiefs of the party, nor, indeed, is there any evidence that it was communicated to them. That it was an advice hinted to the Heir-apparent, or at least a subject discussed with him, and of which memoranda remain in the Chief Justice's handwriting, is very confidently affirmed from ocular inspection. Whether or not a very popular prince might with safety have ventured upon such an experiment, is a question so wide of the actual case, that no time needs be wasted upon its solution. That the individual to whom this perilous advice was tendered could not have done so without a civil war, appears sufficiently evident. Indeed, the marriage *de facto*, legal or illegal, which he had contracted with a Catholic lady, and of which the circumstances were generally known, would alone have furnished Mr. Pitt with a sufficient objection to his title; and the country would have owed to one of her reverend judges the blessings of a disputed succession and intestine tumults, such as she had not ex-

gross and shameless fraud, and give the countenance of their acquiescence to every avowal of profligate principles which can be made before them. At present they are only known to the rest of their fellow-citizens for a mass of people never consulted, though absolutely ruled by the priests and the patriots who use them as blind, unreflecting tools. Yet the genius and the worth of the nation are denied by none. May they soon be really emancipated, and learn to think and act for themselves!

perienced since the days of the two roses. There can be little doubt, whether we consider the character of the man, or his subsequent conduct towards George III. on the Catholic question, and his advice respecting the Coronation oath, that part of Lord Loughborough's design was to obtain an undivided control over the Prince, who should then have flung himself into his hands by adopting his extreme opinions, and acting upon such hazardous councils.

The discomfiture of the opposition party by the king's recovery, and by the great accession to his personal popularity which his illness had occasioned, left Lord Loughborough no prospect of power for some years. The French Revolution was then approaching, and the Whigs suffered the almost irreparable blow of the Portland party separating themselves upon the great questions connected with that event. He was one of the seceders; nor in taking this step did he quit his allies of the North school. The Great Seal, now within his reach by Lord Thurlow's quarrel with Mr. Pitt, may have operated as an additional temptation to close his ears against the evils of the war into which this junction plunged the country; but one who had defended the Government steadily through all the calamities of the American contest, had not much to learn of fortitude in seasons of difficulty, or of patience under public misfortune. He held the Great Seal for seven or eight years, and was at the head of the law during the period of attempted proscription and actual persecution of the Reformers, the professors of those opinions carried to the extreme, which the Whigs, his late allies, professed in more moderation, and with a larger admixture of aristocratic prejudices. But of him it cannot be said, as of Mr. Pitt, that he had ever professed reform principles. On the contrary, the North party at all times differed upon that question with their Foxite coadjutors, who, indeed, differed sufficiently upon it among themselves.

The character of Lord Loughborough stood far less high as a judge, than as either a debater in parliament, or an advocate at the bar. His decisions evince little of the learning of his profession; and do not even show a very legal structure of the understanding. They are frequently remarkable enough for clear and even felicitous statement; but in close argument, as in profound knowledge, they are evidently deficient. Some of his judgments in the Common Pleas were more distinguished by ability, and more admired at the time, than any which he pronounced in the court where the greater part of his life had been passed. But he was not unpopular at the head of the profession. His manners were courteous and even noble; his liberality was great. Wholly above any sordid feelings of avarice or parsimony, and only valuing his high station for the powers which it conferred, and the dignity with which it was com-

passed round about, he maintained its state with a munificent expenditure, and amassed no money for his heirs. He was, moreover, endued with personal qualities which a generous profession is apt to esteem highly. Reasonably accomplished as a scholar, cultivating all his life the society of literary men, determined and unhesitating in his conduct, polite in his demeanour, elegant, dignified in his habits, equal in his favour to all practitioners, unawed by their talents as uninfluenced by any partialities, and resolute in maintaining his own and his profession's independence of any ministerial authority—those who have succeeded him never advanced greater claims to the personal confidence or respect of the Bar; and his known deficiencies in much higher qualifications were overlooked by men who felt somewhat vain of being ruled or being represented by such a chief. In this exalted station he remained during the whole eventful years that followed the breaking out of the French war, and until the retirement of those who had made it, a retirement probably occasioned by the necessity of restoring peace, but usually ascribed to the controversy on the Catholic question, its pretext and occasion rather than its cause.

The fancy respecting the Coronation oath which so entirely obtained possession of George III.'s mind, and actuated his conduct during the whole discussion of Irish affairs, is now generally believed to have been impressed upon it by Lord Loughborough, and probably was devised by his subtle mind, as it was used by his intriguing spirit, for the purpose of influencing the king. But if this was the object of the notable device, never did intriguer more signally fail in his scheme. The cabinet to which he belonged was broken up; a still more crafty successor obtained both the place he had just quitted in the king's service, and the place he had hoped to fill in the king's favour; he was made an earl; he was laid on the shelf; and, as his last move, he retired to a villa remarkable for its want of all beauty and all comforts, but recommended by its near neighbourhood to Windsor Castle, where the former Chancellor was seen dancing a ridiculous attendance upon royalty, unnoticed by the object of his suit, and marked only by the jeering and motley crowd that frequented the terrace. For three years he lived in this state of public neglect, without the virtue to employ his remaining faculties in his country's service by parliamentary attendance, or the manliness to use them for his own protection and aggrandisement. When he died, after a few hours' illness, the intelligence was brought to the king, who, with a circumspection abundantly characteristic, asked the bearer of it, if he was quite sure of the fact, as Lord Rosslyn had not been ailing before; and, upon being assured that a sudden attack of gout in the stomach had really ended the days of his late servant and once assiduous courtier, his majesty was

graciously pleased to exclaim—"Then he has not left a worse man behind him."*

It is the imperative duty of the historian to dwell upon the fate, while he discloses with impartial fulness, and marks with just reprobation, the acts of such men; to the end that their great success, as it is called, may not mislead others, and conceal behind the glitter of worldly prosperity, the baser material with which the structure of their fortune is built up. This wholesome lesson, and indeed needful warning, is above all required when we are called upon to contemplate a professional and political life so eminently prosperous as the one which we have been contemplating, which rolled on in an uninterrupted tide of worldly gain and worldly honours, but was advanced only by shining and superficial talents, supported by no fixed principles, illustrated by no sacrifices to public virtue, embellished by no feats of patriotism, nor made memorable by any monuments of national utility; and which, being at length closed in the disappointment of mean, unworthy desires, ended amidst universal neglect, and left behind it no claim to the respect or the gratitude of mankind, though it may have excited the admiration or envy of the contemporary vulgar.

LORD THURLOW.

The other helpmate upon whom Gibbon paints the pilot of the state as reposing, was as different a person from Lord Loughborough in all respects as can well be imagined. We refer of course to Mr. Thurlow, who filled the office of attorney-general until the year 1778, when he took the great seal. The remains that have reached us of his exhibitions as a speaker, whether at the bar, in parliament, or on the bench, are more scanty still than those of his colleagues; for, while he sat on the bench, the reports in Chancery were on the meagre and jejune footing of the older books; and it is only over a year or two of his presiding in the Court, that Mr. Vesey, junior's, full and authentic reports extend. There seems, however, from all accounts, to have been much less lost of Lord Thurlow than there would have been of subsequent judges, had the old-fashioned summaries only of equity proceedings been preserved; for his way was to decide, not to reason; and, in court as well as in parliament, no man ever performed the office, whether of judging or debating, with a smaller expenditure of argument.

This practice, if it saves the time of the public, gives but little

* The liberty has been taken to translate the expressive, though homely English of royalty, into a phrase more decorous and less unfeeling upon such an occasion.

satisfaction to the suitor. The judges who pursue it forget that, to satisfy the parties, or at least to give them such grounds as ought to satisfy reasonable men, is in importance only next to giving them a right judgment. Almost as important is it to satisfy the profession and the country, which awaits to gather the law, the rule of their conduct in advising or in acting, from the lips of the judge. Nor is it immaterial to the interest even of the party who gains, that the grounds should be made known of his success, especially in courts from which there lies an appeal to a higher tribunal. The consequence of Sir John Leach deciding generally with few or no reasons assigned was, that appeals were multiplied; the successful party had only obtained half a victory; and it became a remark frequent in the mouths of successive chancellors, that causes were *decided* below, but *heard* before them. It is an unaccountable mistake into which some fall, when they fancy that the more weight is attached to such mere sentences, because prefaced by no reasons; as if the judge were to declare the law, infallible like an oracle, or omnipotent like a lawgiver, and keep to himself all knowledge of the route by which he had arrived at his conclusion. The very reverse is true. With an enlightened bar and an intelligent people, the mere authority of the bench will cease to have any weight at all, if it be unaccompanied with argument and explanation. But were it otherwise, the reason would fail, and signally fail; for the only increase of weight derived from the practice would be that to which the judgment had no claim, namely, the outward semblance to the ignorant multitude of a determination more clear and positive than really existed. Add to all this, that no security whatever can be afforded for the mind of the judge having been directed to the different parts of each case, and his attention having been held awake to the whole of the discussions at the bar, still less in equity-proceedings of his having read the affidavits and other documentary evidence, unless he states explicitly the view which he takes of the various matters, whether of law or of fact, that have been brought before him. With the exception of Sir John Leach, Lord Thurlow is the last judge who adopted the very bad practice of unreasoned decisions. But his habit of cavilling at the reasons of the common-law courts, when a case was sent to them for their opinion, a habit largely followed by Lord Eldon, extended to those courts, in a remarkable and very hurtful manner, Lord Thurlow's own practice: for the temper of those learned individuals became ruffled; and, impatient of criticism upon their reasonings, instead of rather courting a discussion of them, they adopted the evil method of returning their answers or certificates without any reasons at all—a conduct which nothing but the respect due to the bench could hinder men from terming childish in the extreme. This custom having been much censured by suc-

ceeding chancellors, and the House of Lords itself having of late years departed altogether from the old rule of only assigning reasons where a judgment or decree is to be reversed or varied upon Appeal, it is to be hoped that the common-law judges will once more deign to let the profession know the grounds of their judgments upon the highly important cases sent from Chancery, as they do without the least fear of cavil or criticism upon any trifling matter that comes before them, and do (be it most reverently observed in passing) with very little desire to avoid either prolixity or repetition.

If Lord Thurlow, however, has left no monuments of judicial eloquence; and if, indeed, his place among lawyers was not the highest, he is admitted to have well understood the ordinary practice and leading principles of those courts in which he had passed his life; and his judgments for the most part gave satisfaction to the profession. He had no mean powers of despatching the business of the court, and of the House of Lords when presiding upon appeals; nor could any man in this article resemble him less than the most eminent of his successors, who was understood to have made him the model in some things of his conversation, garnishing it, after his manner, with expletives rather sonorous than expressive, but more expressive than becoming. Far from showing, like Lord Eldon, a patience which no prolixity could exhaust, and a temper which was neither to be vexed by desperate argumentation nor by endless repetition—farther still from courting protracted and renewed dicussion of each matter, already worn thread-bare—Lord Thurlow showed to the suitor a determined, and to the bar a surly, aspect, which made it perilous to try experiments on the limits of his patience, by making it somewhat doubtful if he had any patience at all. Aware that the judge he was addressing knew enough of their common profession not to be imposed upon, and bore so little deference to any other as to do exactly what suited himself—nay, apprehensive that the measure of his courtesy was too scanty to obstruct the overflow in very audible sounds of the sarcastic and peremptory matter which eyes of the most fixed gloom, beneath eye-brows formed by nature to convey the abstract idea of a perfect frown, showed to be gathering or already collected—the advocate was compelled to be select in choosing his topics and temperate in handling them: and oftentimes, felt reduced to a painful dilemma better fitted for the despatch than the right decision of causes, the alternative being presented of leaving material points unstated, or calling down against his client the unfavourable determination of the Court. It would be incorrect to state that Lord Thurlow, in this respect, equalled or even resembled Sir John Leach, with whom every consideration made way for the vanity of clearing his cause-paper in a time which rendered it physically impossible for the causes

to be heard. But he certainly more nearly approached that extreme than he did the opposite, of endless delay and habitual vacillation of expression rather than of purpose, upon which Lord Eldon made shipwreck of his judicial reputation, though possessing all the greater qualities of a lawyer and a judge. In one important particular he and Sir John Leach closely resembled each other, and as widely differed from the other eminent person who has just been named. While on the bench, the mind of both was given wholly to the matter before them, and never wandered from it at all. An ever-wakeful and ever-fixed attention at once enabled them to apprehend the merits of each case and catch each point at the first statement, precluded the necessity of much after-consideration and reading, and, indeed, rehearing; and kept the advocate's mind also directed to his points, confining his exertions within reasonable limits, while it well rewarded him for his closeness and his conciseness. The judge's reward, too, was proportionably great. He felt none of that load which pressed upon Lord Eldon when he reflected how much remained for him to do after all the fatigue of his attendance in Court had been undergone; that anxiety which harassed him lest points should escape his reading that might have been urged in the oral arguments he had heard without listening to them; the irritation which vexed him until he had from long use ceased to care much for it, when he looked around him upon the inextricable confusion of his judicial affairs, and, like the embarrassed trader, became afraid to look any more, or examine any closer the details of his situation. If a contrast were to be formed between the ease and the discomfort of a seat upon the bench, as far as the personal feelings of the occupiers are concerned, it would hardly be possible to go beyond that which was afforded by Thurlow to Eldon.

Of his powers as a debater there are now no means to form an estimate, except what tradition, daily becoming more scanty and precarious, may supply. He possessed great depth of voice, rolled out his sentences with unbroken fluency, and displayed a confidence both of tone and of assertion which, accompanied by somewhat of Dr. Johnson's balanced sententiousness, often silenced when it did not convince; for of reasoning he was proverbially sparing: there are those indeed who will have it that he never was known to do anything which, when attended to, even looked like using an argument, although, to view the speaker and carelessly to hear him, you would say he was laying waste the whole field of argumentation and dispersing and destroying all his antagonists. His aspect was more solemn and imposing than almost any other person's in public life, so much so that Mr. Fox used to say, it proved him dishonest since no man could *be* so wise as he *looked*. Nor did he neglect any of the external circumstances, how trifling soever, by which attention and

deference could be secured on the part of his audience. Not only were his periods well rounded, and the connecting matter or continuing phrases well flung in, but the tongue was so hung as to make the sonorous voice peal through the hall, and appear to convey things which it would be awful to examine too near, and perilous to question. Nay, to the more trivial circumstance of his place, when addressing the House of Lords, he scrupulously attended. He rose slowly from his seat: he left the woolsack with deliberation; but he went not to the nearest place, like ordinary Chancellors, the sons of mortal men; he drew back by a pace or two, and, standing as it were askance, and partly behind the huge bale he had quitted for a season, he began to pour out, first in a growl, and then in a clear and louder roll, the matter which he had to deliver, and which for the most part consisted in some positive assertions, some personal vituperation, some sarcasms at classes, some sentences pronounced upon individuals as if they were standing before him in judgment, some vague mysterious threats of things purposely not expressed, and abundant protestations of conscience and duty, in which they who keep the consciences of kings are somewhat apt to indulge.

It is obvious that to give any examples that could at all convey an idea of this kind of vamped up, outside, delusive, nay, almost fraudulent oratory, would be impossible; but one or two passages may be rehearsed. When he had, in 1788, first intrigued actively with the Whigs and the Prince upon the Regency question, being apparently inclined to prevent his former colleague, and now competitor, from clutching that prize—suddenly discovering, from one of the physicians, the approaching convalescence of the Royal patient, he at one moment's warning quitted the Carlton House party, and came down, with an assurance unknown to all besides, perhaps even to himself not known before, and in his place undertook the defence of the King's rights against his son and his partisans. The concluding sentence of this unheard-of performance was calculated to set all belief at defiance, coming from the man and in the circumstances. It assumed, for the sake of greater impressiveness, the form of a prayer; though certainly it was not poured out in the notes of supplication, but rather rung forth in the sounds that weekly call men to the service: "And when I forget my Sovereign, may God forget me!" Whereupon Wilkes, seated upon the foot of the throne, and who had known him long and well, is reported to have said, somewhat coarsely, but not unhappily, it must be allowed, "Forget you? He 'll see you d——d first." Another speech in a different vein is preserved, and shows some powers of drollery certainly. In the same debates, a noble character, who was remarkable for his delicacy and formal adherence to etiquette, having indeed filled diplomatic stations during great part of his life, had cited

certain resolutions passed at the Thatched House Tavern by some great party meeting. In adverting to these Lord Thurlow said, "As to what the noble Lord told you that he had heard at the ale-house.' The effect of this humour, nearly approaching, it must be allowed, to a practical joke, may easily be conceived by those who are aware how much more certain in both Houses of Parliament the success of such things always is, than of the most refined and exalted wit. Upon another occasion, his misanthropy, or rather his great contempt of all mankind, broke out characteristically enough. This prevailing feeling of his mind made all respect testified towards any person, all praise bestowed upon men, nay all defence of them under attack, extremely distasteful to him; indeed, almost matter of personal offence. So, once having occasion to mention some public functionary, whose conduct he intimated that he disapproved, he thought fit to add, "But far be it from me to express any blame of any official person, whatever may be my opinion; for that, I well know, would lay me open to hear his panegyric." At the bar he appears to have dealt in much the same wares; and they certainly formed the staple of his operations in the commerce of society. His jest at the expense of two eminent civilians, in the Duchess of Kingston's case, is well known, and was no doubt of considerable merit. After those very learned personages had come forth from the recesses where doctors "most do congregate," but in which they divide with their ponderous tomes the silence that is not broken by any stranger footstep, and the gloom that is pierced by no light from without, and appearing in a scene to which they were as strange as its gaiety was to their eyes, had performed alternately the various evolutions of their recondite lore, Mr. Thurlow was pleased to say that the congress of two doctors always reminded him of the noted saying of Cassius:—"Mirari se quod haruspex haruspicem sine risu adspicere posset." In conversation he was, as in debate, sententious and caustic. Discoursing of the difficulty he had in appointing to a high legal situation, he described himself as long hesitating between the intemperance of A, and the corruption of B; but finally preferring the former. Then, as if afraid, lest he had for a moment been betrayed into anything like unqualified commendation of any person, he added, correcting himself,—"Not that there was not a —— deal of corruption in A's intemperance." He had, however, other stores from which to furnish forth his talk; for he was a man of no mean classical attainments; read much Greek, as well as Latin, after his retirement from office; and having become associated with the Whigs, at least in the intercourse of society, passed a good deal of time in the society of Mr. Fox, for whom it is believed that he felt a great admiration, at least he praised him in a way exceedingly unusual with him, and was therefore sup-

posed to have admired him as much as could any person, independent of the kind of thankfulness which he must have felt to any formidable opposer of Mr. Pitt, whom he hated with a hatred as hearty as even Lord Thurlow could feel, commingling his dislike with a scorn wholly unbecoming and misapplied.

When he quitted the great seal, or rather when Mr. Pitt and he quarrelling, one or other must go, and the former was well resolved to remain, the retired chancellor appeared to retain a great interest in all the proceedings of the court which he had left, and was fond of having Sir John Leach, then a young barrister, to spend the evenings with him, and relate whatever had passed in the course of the day. It seemed somewhat contrary to his selfish nature and contracted habits of thinking, that he should feel any great concern about the course which the administration of justice should take, now that he slumbered upon the shelf. But the mystery was easily explained, by observing that he really felt, in at least its ordinary force, the affection which men long used to office bear towards those who are so presumptuous as to succeed them; and he was gratified by thus sitting as a secret court of revision, hearing of any mistakes committed by Lord Loughborough, and pronouncing in no very measured terms his judgment of reversal upon many things in which the latter no doubt was right.

That his determination and clearness were more in manner than in the real vigour of his mind, there can be no doubt; for, though in disposing of causes, he may have shown little oscitancy, as indeed there seldom arises any occasion for it where a judge is reasonably acquainted with his business and gives his attention without reserve to the dispatch of it, yet, in all questions of political conduct, and all deliberations upon measures, he is known to have been exceedingly irresolute. Mr. Pitt found him a colleague wholly unfruitful in council, though always apt to raise difficulties, and very slow and irresolute of purpose. The Whigs, when he joined them, soon discovered how infirm a frame of mind there lay concealed behind the outward form of vigour and decision. He saw nothing clear but the obstacles to any course; was fertile only of doubts and expedients to escape deciding; and appeared never prompt to act, but ever ready to oppose whoever had anything to recommend. So little, as might be expected, did this suit the restless and impatient vehemence of Mr. Francis, that he described him as "that enemy of all human action."

Of a character so wanting in the sterling qualities which entitle the statesman to confidence and respect, or the orator to admiration, it cannot be affirmed that what he wanted in claims to public favour he made up in titles to esteem or affection as a private individual. His life was passed in so great and habitual a disregard of the de-

corum usually cast round high station, especially in the legal profession, as makes it extremely doubtful if the grave and solemn exterior in which he was wont to shroud himself were anything more than a manner he had acquired; for, assuredly, to assert that he wore it as a cloak whereby men might be deceived, would hardly be consistent with his ordinary habits, as remote as well could be from all semblance of hypocrisy: and so far from an affectation of appearing better than he was, that he might almost be said to affect, like the Regent Orleans, the "bad eminence" of being worse.*

LORD MANSFIELD.

CONTEMPORARY with these two distinguished lawyers, during the latter period of his life, was a legal personage in every respect far more eminent than either, *the first* Lord Mansfield, than whom few men, not at the head of state affairs, have in any period of our history filled an exalted station for a longer period with more glory to themselves, or with a larger share of influence over the fortunes of their country. He was singularly endowed with the qualities most fitted both to smooth for him the path to professional advancement, to win the admiration of the world at large, and to maintain or even expand the authority of whatever official situation he might be called to occupy. Enjoying all the advantages of a finished classical education; adding to this the enlargement of mind derived from foreign travel, undertaken at an age when attentive observation can be accompanied with mature reflection; he entered upon the profession of the law some years after he had reached man's estate; and showed as much patient industry in awaiting, by attendance in the courts, the emoluments and the honours of the gown, as he had evinced diligence in qualifying himself for its labours and its duties. His connexion with Scotland easily introduced him into the practice afforded by the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords;† and the accidental indisposition of his leader, a few years afterwards, having given him an opportunity of distinguishing himself before a jury, he

* St. Simon relates a saying of Louis XIV., respecting his celebrated nephew, which, he says, paints him to the life, and, therefore, that skilful writer of memoirs is unbounded in his praise of this "trait de plume." "Encore est-il fanfaron des vices qu'il n'a pas."

† He soon rose to such eminence in this, that his biographer, Halliday, has mentioned him as engaged in thirty appeals during one session. A worse piece of biography than Halliday's, it may be observed in passing, hardly exists, notwithstanding its having so admirable a subject.

speedily rose into extensive practice, not, however, so much in Common-Law Courts as in Chancery.

Ten years after he entered the profession he was made Solicitor-General and came into parliament, which he had hitherto shunned, observing, with the caution so characteristic of the man and of the nation, "That he had many respected friends on both sides of the House, and did not care to lose the patronage of both parties for the favour of one." If this principle be as great an honour to his public virtue as to his personal discretion, his biographer has done well to record it in proof of the praises which he lavishes upon him; and certainly nothing in the subsequent course of his life can be found which betokens a falling off from the wary circumspection of his outset in life.

His powers as an advocate were great, though not first-rate. In manner, which he had studied so much that Pope was found one day superintending him while he practised before a looking-glass—in a sweetness of voice which by nature was almost unequalled—in clearness and skill of statement, which he so greatly laboured, that it was said his story was worth other men's argument,—in the wariness and discretion so necessary to one that represents another's interests, as an advocate does his client's,—in knowledge accurate, as far as it went, if not very profound, of the principles of the law; and in an enlarged view of general subjects, whether of jurisprudence or of a more liberal kind—he stood high, either above all his contemporaries, or in their foremost rank. A certain want of vigour, arising from the inroads which his constitutional caution made into the neighbouring dominions of its ally, fear, prevented him from ever filling the first place among advocates; and to anything that deserved the name of genius or of originality he preferred at no time and in no station any claims. Atkins, his staunch admirer, has preserved, with extreme eulogy, one of his arguments in a case of great importance; it is learned and able, but far from justifying the preference given to it over those of the other council, whose arguments in the same cause are also reported.

In the House of Commons it was his fortune to defend the measures of government, when no men of eminence filled the front ranks of the opposition party, excepting Mr. Pitt (Lord Chatham); and the perilous task of encountering him always was reserved for the ministerial chief himself. That he was very successful as an elegant and persuasive speaker, is certain; that he was unequal to fill a first place, at a time when the secret had not been discovered of posting second-rate men in such positions, is as undeniable; and it is known that he felt this inadequacy: for an arrangement was at one period proposed, by which he was to have taken the lead, on the part of the government, and he peremptorily declined it. Indeed, he was both

conscious of his power lying in a different direction, and resolved to follow the bent at once of his capacity and his inclination. Accordingly, on the death of Chief Justice Ryder, though much pressed to remain in parliament at a time when the ministry could ill spare him from the Treasury Bench, he distinctly intimated that, if he were not promoted to the place which he considered the Attorney-General's right, he should cease to hold any place; and a hint which was easily understood was wisely taken.

Over that great court he presided above thirty years; and his administration of its functions during that long period shed a lustre alike upon the tribunal and the judge. Although he had chiefly practised in Chancery and the House of Lords, yet his correct legal understanding, his excellent sense, his familiar acquaintance with the general principles of jurisprudence, easily and speedily supplied any deficiency which he might have in the practice of the Common-Law Courts, and the proceedings at Nisi Prius; while his whole faculties, his temper, and his manners, down to the very defects which he had betrayed as an advocate, were admirably calculated for his more exalted station. His mind and his habits were, indeed, eminently judicial; and it may be doubted if, taking both the externals and the more essential qualities into the account, that go to form a great judge, any one has ever administered the laws in this country whom we can fairly name as his equal. The greatest clearness of apprehension; quickness sufficient, and not extreme, which, in a judge, is perilous, often allied with impatience, and apt to degenerate into hastiness; admirable perspicuity of statement, whether delivering his opinion to the court and the bar, or giving his directions to a jury; conciseness with clearness; these were the contributions which his understanding made towards the formation of his judicial character. Then he had a constant command of himself, never betrayed into anger, or impatience, nor ever showing spleen or any other breach of strict equality and perfect equanimity, either towards parties or their advocates. To those higher qualities, intellectual and moral, he added the graces of a diction classical and elegant; the ornament and, indeed, the illustration of frequent reference to larger views than the more technical discussion of legal questions requires; and the fascination of a voice singularly flexible and sweet; and he flung over the whole of this fine judicial figure the garb of a manner, at once dignified and attractive. They who never had seen Lord Thurlow, might well imagine they had heard him, if they enjoyed access to such excellent imitators as George IV. and Lord Holland. As perfect a substitute for Lord Mansfield's manner was to be found in Lord Erskine, between whom and that celebrated person there long prevailed a great intimacy, founded upon very sincere mutual admiration.

The benefits conferred by this accomplished Judge upon the Court where he so long presided, and upon its suitors, were manifold and substantial. He began by at once so regulating the distribution of the business, as to remove all uncertainty of the matters which should be taken up each day, and to diminish both the expense and the delay and the confusion of former times. He restored to the whole bar the privilege of moving in turn, instead of confining this to the last day of the term. He almost abolished the tedious and costly practice of having the same case argued several times over, restricting such rehearings to questions of real difficulty and adequate importance. He gave as many hours to the business both of Banc and of sittings as was required for dispatching it without unnecessary delay. The ascendant which he gained both over the Bar and the Bench, precluded all needless prolixity of argument, all unseemly wrangling between the Court and the Council, all inconvenient differences of opinion among the Judges. The result was, that while no time was wasted, great satisfaction was given by the clear and rational grounds upon which the decisions were rested; while the cases were so speedily and so well dispatched, that the other Courts of Common Law were drained of their business without the channels of the Court of King's Bench being choked up or overflowing. For nearly thirty years there were not more than half a dozen cases in which the Judges differed; and not so many in which the judgments pronounced were reversed.

But during a considerable period Lord Mansfield also presided in the House of Lords, or, as a legal member of that body, directed its decisions upon appeals. Nothing could be more satisfactory than his conduct of this very important department; nor anything less resembling one at least of his most eminent successors, Lord Eldon, in discharging this duty. He was master of each case when it was called on for hearing, and put the council to argue the points made on either side in those expensively prepared printed statements, which Lord Eldon used to treat with the attention due to equal masses of waste paper. But he did not prevent any new points from being raised at the bar, any more than he could wish to prevent any new arguments from being urged in support of the points which the printed cases disclosed. He showed, too, as great firmness and vigour in forming his judgment, although upon questions of foreign law, as he did in expediting the conduct of the arguments, although in the hands of advocates accustomed to somewhat prolix statements. Where he was clearly convinced that the Scotch Judges had mistaken their own law, he did not scruple to reverse their decisions, and restore the violated purity of the system, although in doing so he assumed to correct those who had made it the study of their lives; even upon heads peculiar to Scottish jurisprudence, to which the English law affords no parallel, and on which he could derive no light at all from his

own professional habits. It was he who reversed the decision of the Court of Session upon the celebrated Duntreath case; which, as ruled by him, forms now as much the corner-stone of the Scotch law of entail, as Shelly's case does that of England; and, while all lawyers are now agreed that he was right, it may fairly be doubted whether some of his successors, and especially Lord Eldon, would have ventured to overrule some other judgments in which the Scottish Courts had equally gone astray in applying their own law, had not Lord Mansfield shown the salutary courage which he displayed in that first and most remarkable reversal. It is not easy to overrate the importance of such an able and judicious administration of the powers vested in the High Court of Appeal. Encumbered as that tribunal is with so many difficulties from the foreign law which it must needs administer, and without those aids from the Judges, which it has at hand upon the far better known and more settled matters of English Jurisprudence, nothing can preserve the purity of our judicial system, or retain towards it the respect and affection of the Scottish nation, except a succession of such able, enlightened, and determined Judges as Lord Mansfield in that high Court ever proved himself to be.

Upon all common cases where a Judge can have no possible reason for leaning towards one side rather than another in a country where judicial bribery or solicitation is unknown, no breach of strict justice can ever be committed except through the temper of the individual, or his want of firmness towards particular practitioners. But occasionally there arise questions in our Courts, and especially in the King's Bench, the first criminal tribunal of the realm, where political considerations mix themselves with the trial, and where the result affects party interests or party prejudices—questions, the occurrence of which would have made the placing a Lord Chief Justice in the cabinet a grievous breach of the constitution in 1806, although there had been no other reasons against that most reprehensible proceeding. That Lord Mansfield was no longer the same pattern of living justice, the same *lex loquens* on those occasions, has been very generally affirmed; and although the errors of his enemies, especially of Junius, have been long since exploded, there is little room to doubt that in trials for libel he leant against the freedom of discussion, and favoured those doctrines long current, but now cried down by statute, which withdrew the cognizance of the question from the Jury to vest it in the Court. That he felt the same disgust at newspaper attacks upon individuals, the same dislike of vehement and unmeasured invectives against the abuses of our institutions, the same alarm at assaults upon the existing institutions themselves, which in all ages have distinguished all our judges, may readily be admitted. Who will pretend, even in our days, far more before Mr. Fox's Libel Act,

that Lord Mansfield alone of all judges defined the liberty of the press only as a power of publishing without a previous licence? In this, as in all his opinions and prejudices upon the subject, he resembled all other judges of all former times, and, with very few exceptions, those also of our own day. But that he should ever betray his prejudices or his feelings in any breach of justice while trying particular cases, would have been eminently inconsistent with the whole tenor of his cautious and circumspect demeanour upon the bench, and have betokened a want of that self-command which in him was so habitual as to have become truly a second nature. His leaning towards the side of authority was once or twice remarked in cases of importance, but cases where both the legal principle and the practice were far from being clearly settled. Thus upon application for a mandamus to the Justices to make an order of filiation upon a foreign ambassador's secretary, he somewhat hastily refused it, supposing the motion to be a device for obtaining the court's opinion, and an attempt to draw it into collision with foreign states. This view was manfully resisted by the council who moved; and Mr. Justice Yates took part with them. In the end Lord Mansfield gave way, and the remedy was granted as sought. But it must be observed, that the third Judge present, Mr. Justice Aston, at first entirely concurred with the Chief Justice, and only changed his opinion upon further consideration, being moved by the reasoning of the dissenting judge. Great objection was likewise taken to his directing a jury in the case of Lord Grosvenor's action for seduction, against the Duke of Cumberland, that the rank and station of the plaintiff made no difference in his claim to damages; an opinion which, after the greater experience of later times in such proceedings, appears as soon as it is stated to be altogether erroneous, but which, if it favoured the Prince who was defendant on the one hand, certainly indicated, on the other, a sufficient respect for the equal rights of all classes of plaintiffs, and might be as unpalatable to the Aristocracy as it was pleasing to the Crown.

There needs little to be said of what at the time created great discussion in the profession, the judgment which he delivered in the celebrated case of Perrin *v.* Blake. That it was erroneous, no lawyer can doubt. But that it required all the adherence to strict principle of which the most technical mind is susceptible, to apply in such a question the famous Rule in Shelly's case, is equally certain; for in order to make that application, and to consummate the triumph of the Rule, it was necessary for the court to construe a man's will giving an estate "for the life of the devisee, and no longer," as a gift of that estate to him in tail, consequently with the power of at once converting his interest into a fee simple. Although it is impossible to deny that this is the true legal construction of such a devise, if, as in the case of J. Williams's will, the remainder is

afterwards given to the heirs of the devisee's body; for to hold otherwise would be to abrogate the rule in Shelly's case, which is both founded on strict legal principles, and has for centuries been the corner-stone of English conveyancing: yet it is fit that we keep in mind the apparent paradox to which it led, in order to account for so great a Judge as Lord Mansfield having leant against this application, which he regarded as an extension of the Rule; and from which his wise and wholesome habit of always as much as possible preferring substance to technicality made him deviate. It must also be observed, that here, as in the former instance, he had the concurrence of his learned brethren, excepting only Mr. Justice Yates; whose difference of opinion led to his leaving the Court of King's Bench, and removing to the Common Pleas for the very short residue of his truly respectable and useful life.* But an accident of a most unimportant kind made more talk in Westminster Hall than all the real merits of either the judges or the cause. It appeared that while at the bar Lord Mansfield's opinion had been taken upon the point raised by this very will, and that he had said, as he ought to have said, "The devisee takes an estate tail, and not for life." Surely no one can ever read the remarks of Mr. Booth, Mr. Fearne, and other conveyancers upon this trifling circumstance, and not marvel at their pedantry and captiousness, so little worthy of such learned and able men. What if Mr. Murray's opinion differed from Lord Mansfield's judgment? It would not have proved the judgment to have been wrong; and if the councillor had given what on more mature deliberation, and after hearing the case argued by all the learning of the bar, the Judge deemed an erroneous opinion, was he to sacrifice his duty of deciding by his conscience at the time, to an unworthy fear of appearing inconsistent? If his opinion had undergone a change, was he not to avow it? Nay, was it any shame to change his opinion upon hearing the subject for the first time fully discussed?

The ridiculous charge brought by Junius and others against his direction to the jury on the Home Circuit, in a case of trespass between two unknown individuals, and where no possible motive for partiality could be imagined or was ever pretended, we hardly perhaps should mention, were it not an illustration of the outcry which absolute ignorance may sometimes succeed in raising. It was the case of Mears *v.* Ansell, which was tried before him on the

* This able, learned, and upright Judge showed a courage greatly extolled in those times, but which, it is to be hoped, every member of the bench would now display as a matter of course. The Minister having tampered with him in vain previous to some trial involving rights of the Crown, the King was foolish or wicked enough to write him a letter, and he returned it unopened. Alderman Townsend stated this in Parliament, and it was not contradicted.

circuit, in 1772; and a new trial was granted by the Common Pleas on the ground that the Chief Justice had improperly directed the jury to credit the testimony of two subscribing witnesses, contrary to their signed attestation. Junius called it "a new disgrace of Mansfield;" and the note to his published letter, with profound ignorance of the whole practice of the courts, mentioned it as a proof of extraordinary dissatisfaction with the summing up, that the new trial was granted without the payment of costs; adding, "that the usual terms were thus dispensed with." The same *learned* note adds, that the plaintiff's attorney moved the next term to have his name struck off the Roll of the King's Bench attorneys, and that "he was immediately admitted into the Common Pleas;" a mere matter of course, as every one but Junius must have known.

As to Junius's charge of illegal conduct in bailing a felon taken with the mainour, his celebrated letter betrays as great ignorance of the most commonly known matters of law (*e. g.* that Justices of Peace are at sessions Judges of Record, and are King's Justices) as it does confusion in argument, and vacillation through legal ignorance, and uncertainty about the grounds on which he rests his charge. Indeed, he himself shifted them in defending his first argument; and it was at the time universally allowed that he was altogether in the wrong. Lord Camden was said at first to have agreed with him; but that he abandoned so untenable a ground is plain from his never once, though called upon, venturing to touch the subject. But when he had valiantly denounced impeachment against the Chief Justice for this bail case, much after the manner of Cobbett and others in after times, this writer charged him with gross partiality in reversing the decree against Lord Chatham upon the suit arising out of the Burton Pynsent devise; and after this reversal had been so audaciously ascribed to corrupt favour, towards his political antagonist too, when the matter was examined, it was found that the Commissioners of the Great Seal had only considered one point, and on that had made their decree, whereas there remained another point decisive of the matter, which way soever the former might be determined. Upon this new point the Judges were consulted, and upon this they were unanimous for the appeal, although upon the others they differed; so that a reversal of the decree was almost a matter of course, and it was much rather the act of the Judges than of Lord Mansfield. Junius being overthrown by this plain and incontrovertible statement, had the courage to treat it as a quibble only worthy of a barrister (Letter LXIII.), although he had himself before explicitly said, that he was at issue with Lord Mansfield's defenders on the question whether or not he (Lord Mansfield) had given any opinion on the case in the House of Lords, and "that this was a question of fact to be determined by the evidence only." (Letter LXI.)

These things are far indeed from being unimportant. They affect essentially the question of judicial reputation. They show upon what kind of grounds the fabric of a great man's professional fame, as well as the purity of his moral character, were assailed by the unprincipled violence of party at the instigation of their ignorance, skulking behind the signature made famous by epigrammatic language, and the boldness of being venturesome in the person of a printer who gained by allowing dastardly slander to act through him with a vicarious courage. They lead to reduce the estimate of such an author's value as much as they raise the reputation of those whom, from his lurking-place, he had assailed; and they read a memorable lesson to the people, if upon such subjects the people ever can be taught, not to repose confidence in those who are unknown against men whose whole lives are passed in the face of open day, and under the constant security of personal responsibility. Nor let it be forgotten upon what flimsy pretences the country was required to embark in a persecution of Lord Mansfield. Nor let it cease to be remembered that upon such grounds as we have been surveying the most popular writers of the day were suffered to call him "cowardly"—"cunning"—"dishonest"—"a juggler"—"a bad man and a worse judge"—"a creature at one time hateful, at another contemptible"—"one meriting every term of reproach and every idea of detraction the mind can form"—"a cunning Scotchman, who never speaks truth without a fraudulent design"—"a man of whom it is affirmed, with the most solemn appeal to God, that he is the very worst and most dangerous man in the kingdom."* But it turned out afterwards that the same anonymous writer, who, while he wore the mask of Junius, almost ever praised Lord Chatham, had under other disguises assailed him as bitterly as he had his antagonists; and his rancorous abuse of the great patriot does all but outstrip his slanderous assaults upon the venerable judge. He (Lord Chatham) is described as "not a man of mixed character, whose vice might be redeemed by some appearance of virtue and generosity, but a man purely and perfectly bad." It is said we may easily foretell "the progress of such a traitor, and the probable event of his crimes," since he led "a life of artifice, intrigue, hypocrisy, and imprudence;" a career "which equally violates every principle of honour and morality"—"an abandoned profligate"—"so black a villain, that though we have no Tarpeian rock, yet a gibbet is not too honourable a situation for the carcase of a traitor"—"a base apostate"—"the stalking-horse of a stallion" (Lord Bute)—"below contempt"—"a venomous reptile"—"a lunatic"—and "a raving madman†." The great gravemen, too, of

* Junius's Letters, xli. lix. lxiii. lxix.

† Miscellaneous Letters, published by Woodfall (1814), vol. ii.

these charges against him is his leaning towards the Americans, of whom the furious, shallow, and conceited writer was a bitter and intemperate opponent, as he was a bigoted advocate of the mother-country's tyranny.

It may surely be said with justice, that such disclosures as these, while they reduce to their true level the claims of Junius to fame, easily account for the author having died and kept his own secret. He appears to have been a person in whose bosom every fierce and malignant passion raged, without the control of a sound judgment, and without any kindly feeling to attemper his nature. Writing at a time when good or even correct composition was little studied, and in the newspapers hardly ever met with, his polished style, though very far from being a correct one, and farther still from good pure English, being made the vehicle of abuse, sarcasm, and pointed invective, naturally excited a degree of attention which was further maintained by the boldness of his proceedings. No man can read a page of any letter without perceiving that the writer has but one way of handling every subject, and that he constructs his sentences with the sole design of saying the most bitter things he can in the most striking way, without ever regarding in the least degree their being applicable or inapplicable to the object of the attack. The consequence is, that the greater part of his invective will just suit one bad man or wicked minister as well as another. It is highly probable that whoever he might be, he had often attacked those with whom he lived on intimate terms, or to whom he was under obligations. This affords an additional reason for his dying unrevealed. That he was neither Lord Ashburton, nor any other lawyer, is proved by what we have said of his gross ignorance of law. To hold that he was Mr. Francis, is libelling that gentleman's memory; and although much external evidence occurs in pointing towards him, he certainly never wrote anything of the same kind in his own character.

But those charges made against Lord Mansfield's judicial conduct were definite and precise. Others were urged of a kind so vague, that it was impossible distinctly to apprehend or pointedly to meet them. He was accused of encroaching upon the certainty of the common law, by making his views bend to general notions of substantial justice. That he was always anxious to get at the body of the case, and deal with it so as to give merited success to undoubted right, is admitted; and in sometimes neglecting the dictates of technical rules, when they obstructed his path towards substantial justice, he might possibly overlook the great advantages of having a fixed rule applicable to all cases; advantages well worth the unavoidable price which must be paid for them in the occasional hardship, or even apparent absurdity, that may attend their inflexible

application. But when the same objection is advanced to his introducing rules universally applicable, and choosing those which are more consistent with common sense and liberal feeling than with merely technical analogy, we are bound to turn from the criticism with indignation. By this course he was improving our jurisprudence, and not encroaching upon its principles; nor was the certainty of the law in any way impaired by establishing its rules upon an enlarged basis.

That he was fond of drawing over equitable notions from the Courts in which he had been chiefly trained, and applying them to the consideration of legal matters, is the same objection in another form. Some of the most valuable portions of our common law remedies are derived from Equity; witness the action for money had and received, and indeed the action of *Indebitatus assumpsit* generally: and special pleaders who never saw a bill or an answer, but when they were used in evidence at *Nisi Prius*, such men as Mr. *Justice* Chambre (among the first ornaments of his profession, as among the most honest and amiable of men), have shown their sense of the advantage thus gained to the common law by reminding other but less learned men, like Lord Chief Justice Gibbs, of this circumstance, when they grounded their argument upon the position that the point they were attacking was one of an equitable, and not of a legal consideration. As for the clamour (and it was nothing more than clamour, and ignorant clamour too) that Lord Mansfield was making the old Saxon principles of our jurisprudence bend to those of the Civil Law, it is wholly marvellous that men of any understanding or education should have ever been found so much the slaves of faction as to patronise it. Lord Mansfield at no period of his life ever had, or could have had, the least predilection for the civil law, arising from any familiarity with its institutions. He never was a Scotch advocate at all; or if he was, it must have been in the cradle, for he left Scotland at three years of age. With the Consistorial Courts, if by their practice the Civil Law is meant, he had necessarily very little intercourse.* Chancery has nothing to do with that system unless in so far as it prefers the bad practice of written depositions to *vivâ voce* examinations; and also in so far as every rational system of jurisprudence must necessarily have much in common with the most perfect structure that ever was formed of rules for classifying rights and marshalling the remedies for wrongs. Nor can anything be found in all the train of his decisions which

* It would, in our times, have been impossible for him to have any practice at all in these courts unless in cases of appeal, formerly before the Delegates, now in the Privy Council. But when Lord Mansfield was at the bar, it was the custom for common lawyers to attend important cases in Doctors' Commons. This, however, was of rare occurrence.

betokens more leaning towards the Roman code, than a regard for the enlarged and universal principles of abstract justice sanctioned, if it did not prescribe. Yet could the most popular writers of the day, those too whose pretences even to legal learning were the most obtrusive, denounce the Chief Justice as engaged in a deliberate plot to reduce slavery to system, "by making the Roman code the law of nations, and the opinion of foreign civilians his perpetual theme," after the example of "the Norman lawyers, who made the Norman Conquest complete;" and as thus "corrupting by such treacherous arts the noble simplicity and free spirit of our Saxon laws."* Ignorance cannot surely go beyond this point. The civil law only became hostile to liberty, through the imperial portion of it introduced by the Emperors, and which made the will of the Prince the law of the land. In no other particular is it at variance with freedom; and who ever dreamt that Lord Mansfield had the power of introducing that portion, let his inclination have been ever so much bent in such a direction?

But this topic leads us to the political charges which were brought against this great magistrate. Unfortunately for his fame as well as for his tranquillity, he continued to mix in politics, after he ceased to be in the service of the crown as an advocate. He not only acted as Speaker of the House of Lords for above a year, but for a much longer time he had a seat in the cabinet, and took a part in the business of government, all the more objectionable in his position, that it was much more active than it was open and avowed.

While the great seal was in commission previous to Lord Bathurst's obtaining it as Chancellor, Lord Mansfield was, to all political intents and purposes, the Chancellor, without having the responsibility of that high office. Nor did he less act as the legal adviser of the government, when that worthy, but somewhat feeble individual, more ostensibly filled the place. The vice of the Chief Justice's character was a want of boldness, that made him shrink from personal responsibility. Hence he never would accept the first station in the law; and hence, too, he was believed to have urged or advised many things, which he either had opposed or had only passively suffered: for, when once a statesman acquires the evil reputation of shunning responsibility while he seeks power, there is no preventing the world from tracing every mischief to a source which appears to hide itself only because there is something to conceal.

The same want of nerve more than once appeared in his judicial proceedings. When Lord Camden, a man inferior to him in everything but courage, openly attacked his libel law in Woodfall's case, and dared him to defend it, he contented himself with saying, "He would not answer interrogatories." He afterwards challenged Lord

* Junius's Letters, No. xli.

Camden to meet him and argue the question, and when Lord Camden named his day, he refused to debate it. He then had the lords summoned to hear the matter discussed; and he came down and had the house precipitately adjourned, after giving in a paper to the clerk, containing a note of the Opinions of the Judges. When asked if he meant to have it taken into consideration by the house, and would move accordingly, he said, "Oh no, he only meant to give the peers an opportunity of seeing, and, if they chose, taking copies of the note." When desired to say if he would have it entered on the journals, his answer again was, "No, only to leave it with the clerk." We may venture to affirm that no such course of proceeding could safely be pursued by the boldest Judge of our own day, or would be resorted to by the most timid. We may also form an opinion from such conduct in that great Judge, how very different a line he would have taken in such a struggle with the commons, as his honest and patriotic successor has lately been engaged in, had he lived in these times of high parliamentary pretension.

If we possess hardly any remains of Lord Mansfield's speeches at the bar or in parliament, we have considerable materials from which to form an estimate of his judicial eloquence. The Reports of Sir James Burrows are carefully corrected, to all appearance; probably by the learned Judges themselves. Many of the judgments of the Chief Justice are truly admirable in substance, as well as composition; and upon some of the greater questions, his oratory rises to the full height of the occasion. It would be difficult to overrate the merit of the celebrated address to the public, then in a state of excitement almost unparalleled, with which he closed his judgment upon the application to reverse Wilkes's outlawry. Great elegance of composition, force of diction, just and strong but natural expression of personal feelings, a commanding attitude of defiance to lawless threats, but so assumed and so tempered with the dignity which was natural to the man, and which here, as on all other occasions, he sustained throughout, all render this one of the most striking productions on record. The courage, however, rested mainly, if not entirely, in the tone and the words; for, after disposing of the argument, and on all the grounds taken at the bar refusing the reversal, he arrives, by a short and unexpected byeway, at the means of granting Mr. Wilkes's application; and he was therefore well aware all the while that he was reversing the accustomed relation of the *suaviter* and the *fortiter*; nor could be said to do otherwise than couch in the language of rebuke and refusal a full compliance with the popular demands.

His character in private life was unimpeachable. He never had any children, but his domestic virtues were without a stain. His choicest relaxation was in the polished society of literary men and

lovers of the arts; and his powers of conversation are extolled in all the traditions that have reached the present age, as of a very high order. That his manners were polished and winning can easily be believed from the impression his public appearances uniformly made. But when to these were added his great and various knowledge, chiefly of a kind available to the uses of society, his cheerful spirits and mild temper, his love of harmless pleasantry, and his power of contributing towards it by a refined and classical wit, it is not difficult to understand what the reports mean which unite in describing him as fascinating beyond almost all other men of his time. Through a vigorous constitution, upon which no excess of any kind, in mind or in body, had ever made inroads, he lived to an extreme old age, dying from exhausted nature when near ninety. He presided in court regularly till he reached his eighty-second year, and resigned formally in his eighty-fourth, having continued to hold high office for two or three years longer than he ought to have done or could discharge its duties, in the hope of prevailing with the ministry to appoint his favourite, Judge Buller, his successor. But Mr. Pitt, while at the bar, had seen things in that able and unscrupulous magistrate which made him resolve that no such infliction should fall on the English bench; and it is to his virtuous resolution that the preference of Lord Kenyon was due, which Lord Thurlow always arrogated to himself.

It has become the more necessary to dwell at some length upon the history of this great man, because a practice has prevailed of late years in the profession which he adorned, and even upon the bench which he so much more than any of his predecessors illustrated, of treating him with much less respect than is his due. The narrow minds of little men cannot expand even to the full apprehension of that excellence with which superior natures are gifted, or which they have by culture attained. They are sufficiently susceptible however of envious feelings to begrudge virtue the admiration which it has justly earned; and jealous that any portion of applause should be drawn away from the puny technicalities of their own obscure walk, they carp at some trifling slips which may have been made in the less weighty matters of the law, the only portions their understanding can grasp. It has thus grown into a kind of habit with some men, very respectable in their own department, to decry Lord Mansfield as no lawyer, to speak lightly of his decisions, and to gratulate themselves that he did not intrude yet greater changes into our legal system by further departure from strict rules. But a more enlarged view even of the rigorous doctrines of our jurisprudence, will at once brush these cavils away, and show the truth of a position ever denied by the vulgar, both gowned and ungowned, that great minds may be as correct in details, as powerful to deal with the most general principles.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE GIBBS.

Of the class of the inferior though able men to whom we have just referred, the late Sir Vicary Gibbs was certainly among the most eminent; and he had all the perfections of the order, and more than the ordinary share of its faults. It is a great error committed only by those who view them from afar off, to imagine that their learning is of a confined nature, either in their own profession or in other branches of education. They are in no respect mere special pleaders, or men familiar only with the practice of the courts. They are even in some respects not to be termed mere lawyers. They are acquainted with the whole of the law, which they have studied accurately, and might also be admitted to have studied profoundly, if depth can be predicated of those researches, which instinctively dreading to penetrate the more stubborn and more deep-lying vein of first principle, always carry the labourer towards the shallower and softer bed that contains the relics of former workmen, and make him rest satisfied with these patterns as the guide and the rule. All that has been said or written, however, by text-men or by Judges, they know; and of it all, much practice has given them great expertness in the application. Then their education has not been confined to mere matter of law. It has indeed been far from a very enlarged one; nor has it brought them into a familiar acquaintance with the scenes which expand the mind, make it conscious of new powers, and lead it to compare, and expatiate, and explore. Yet has this course of instruction not been without its value; for they are generally well versed in classical literature, and often acquainted with mathematical science. From the one, however, they derive little beside the polish which it communicates, and the taste which it refines; from the other, they only gain a love of strict and inflexible rules, with a disinclination towards the relaxation and allowances prescribed by the diversities of moral evidence. From both they gather a profound deference for all that has been said or done before them, an exclusive veneration for antiquity, and a pretty unsparing contempt for the unlettered and unpolished class which form and ever must form the great bulk of mankind in all communities. A disrespect for all foreign nations and their institutions, has long been another appointed fruit of the same tree; and it has been in proportion to the overweening fondness for everything in our own system, whether of polity or of mere law. The long interruption of all intercourse with the Continent during the late war, had greatly increased these narrow and absurd prejudices, which are now somewhat more nearly brought

back to their ancient level. But still the precise dictates of English statutes, and the dicta of English judges and English text-writers, are with them the standard of justice; and in their vocabulary, English law is as much a synonyme for the perfection of wisdom, as in that of Dean Swift's imaginary kingdom, Houynhm was for the "perfection of nature."

Of lawyers who belong to this class, by far the most numerous in the profession, it is also a great mistake to suppose that the talents are confined to mere legal matters, the discussion of dry points, and the conduct of suits according to technical rules. Many of them are subtle and most able arguers; some even powerful reasoners. As admirable a display of logical acumen, in long and sustained chains of pure ratiocination, is frequently exhibited among their ranks as can be seen in the cultivators of any department of rhetoric, or the students of any branch of science. They often make high pretences to eloquence, and, without attaining its first rank, are frequently distinguished for great powers of speech, as well as extraordinary skill in the management of business. Their legal reputation, however, is the chief object of their care; and in their pursuit of oratory, they aim far more at being eloquent lawyers than orators learned in the law. Hence their estimate of professional merit is all formed on the same principle, and graduated by one scale. They undervalue the accomplishments of the rhetorician, without despising them; and they are extremely suspicious of any enlarged or general views upon so serious a subject as the law. Change, they with difficulty can bring their minds to believe possible; at least any change for the better; and speculation or theory on such matters is so much an object of distrust, or rather of mingled contempt and aversion, that when they would describe any thing ridiculous, or even anomalous in the profession, they cannot go beyond what they call "a speculative lawyer." To expect success in such a one's career was formerly thought absurd. But the great triumph of Sir Samuel Romilly was a sore stumbling-block to technical minds. A free-thinker upon legal matters, if ever any existed; accomplished, learned, eloquent, philosophical; he yet rose to the very head of his profession, and compelled them to believe what Erskine had failed to make them admit—that a man may be minutely learned in all the mere niceties of the law, down to the very meanest detail of Court Practice, and yet be able to soar above the higher levels of general speculation, and to charm by his eloquence, and enlighten by his enlarged wisdom, as much as to rule the Bench and head the Bar by his merely technical superiority.

The professional character of the men whom we are discussing is generally pure and lofty; the order to which they belong is sacred in their eyes; its fame, its dignity, even to its etiquette, must all be kept

unsullied; and whatever may be their prejudices and their habits, political or professional, how great soever their deference to power, how profound their veneration for the bench, how deep-rooted their attachment to existing institutions, how fierce their hostility to all innovations, how grave or how scornful their frown upon the multitude at large, yet is their courage undaunted in defending whatever client may entrust his suit to their patronage, be he a rabble-leader or a treason-monger, a libeller or a blasphemer; and in discharging towards him the high duties of their representative character, they so little regard either the resentment of the government, or the anger of the court, that they hardly are conscious of any effort in sacrificing every personal consideration to the performance of their representative, and because it is representative, their eminently important office.

Of the men whom we have now endeavoured to pourtray as a class, Sir Vicary Gibbs was a perfect sample. Endowed by nature with great acuteness, and an unlimited power of application, he became, to use his own somewhat unseemly expression, towards as considerable a man as himself, and a far more amiable one, "as good a lawyer as that kind of man can be." Disciplined by an excellent classical education, the fruits of which stuck by him to the last, and somewhat acquainted with the favourite pursuits of Cambridge men, his taste was always correct, and his reasoning powers were as considerable as they ever can be in a mind of his narrow range. To eloquence he made only moderate pretences: yet was his language, which gurgled out rather than flowed, often happy, always clear and transparent, owning a source sufficiently pure, if somewhat shallow, and conveying ideas not numerous, not original, not fetched from afar, not brought up from the lower beds of the well, yet suited to each occasion, well under control, and made easily accessible to others in the same proportion in which they were correctly apprehended by himself. His legal arguments were often much to be admired. He did not go by steps, and move on from point to point, garnishing each head with two observations, as many citations, and twice as many cases; so that the whole argument should be without breadth or relief, and each single portion seem as much as any other the pivot upon which the conclusion turned—but he brought out his governing principle roundly and broadly; he put forward his leading idea by which the rest were to be marshalled and ruled; he used his master-key at once, and used it throughout, till he had unlocked all the apartments by which he mounted to the Great Chamber, and he left the closets untouched, that they who followed him might, if they chose, waste their time in picking the locks; or lose their way in the dark bye-passages. It might be said of him, as he said himself of Sir James Mansfield, that "he declared the law," while he argued

his cases; and while others left only the impression on the hearer that many authorities had been cited, and much reading displayed, his argument penetrated into the mind, and made it assent to his positions, without much regarding the support they found from other quarters. But he was also a very considerable person at *Nisi Prius*. His correct and easy knowledge of all legal matters was here by no means his only superiority. He was ready in dealing with evidence; he could present to the Jury the facts of his case boldly and in high relief; though he was wholly unable to declaim, and never dreamt of addressing the feelings or the passions, any more than if he were speaking to mummies without any sensation, much less any feelings or passions to address; yet he could, especially when clothed with the dignity of high official station, deliver himself with considerable emphasis, though without any fluency, and could effect the purpose of impressing the facts upon the Jury's mind, by the same strong and even choice phrases, sparingly used, though coming out with little flow of words, and no roundness of period, which we have remarked among the characteristics of his arguments to the Court upon the law. Those who heard his cross-examination of Colonel Wardle, in the prosecution of Mrs. Clarke, and who understood the real circumstances in which the concerted cross-examination of Major Glenie and Captain Dodd was conducted by Mr. Garrow, could be at no loss in greatly preferring the former display of professional skill and energy. Nor was his address to the Jury less remarkable for energy and for skill. It was a case indeed in which his whole feelings were strongly embarked: he had defended the Duke of York with much ability of a professional kind in the House of Commons, where other influences than that of pure reason were very prevalent; and [he rejoiced to meet upon his own ground the adversaries whom he had failed to defeat upon theirs.

The Treason trials of 1794 were the occasion of this able barrister first being introduced to public notice, and they accelerated his professional rise, although he had already been made secure of great success. He was second council to Mr. Erskine,* as Mr. Erskine had been in Lord George Gordon's case to Mr. Kenyon, afterwards Lord Chief Justice. But although Mr. Gibbs's summing up of the evidence was allowed, on all hands, to be a masterly performance, and of very signal service to the cause, the overwhelming genius of his great

* There was a third, on account of the extreme labour cast upon the council, and, by a kind of connivance, the Court permitted this, although the statute of William III. only allows two, while the Crown had above half a dozen. This third was Mr., now Baron, Gurney, a warm friend of civil and religious liberty, and of that highly respectable and useful family to whom the art of stenography and the history of public proceedings owes much; and whose steady and honest adherence to their principles covers them with honour.

leader so far eclipsed him, that while, in 1780, no one spoke of the chief, but all admiration was reserved for the second in command, in 1794 the leader alone was mentioned, and the important contribution made by the junior to the mighty victory escaped all but professional observation. In Westminster Hall, however, it was estimated at its real worth; and, notwithstanding his narrow-minded notions on political matters, his slavish adherence to the Tory party, his bigoted veneration for existing things, and hatred of all disaffection, or even discontent, the courage and perseverance which he displayed throughout that trying scene, both towards the government whom he was defeating in their frantic scheme, and towards the court whom he was constantly joining his leader to beard, was not surpassed by the technical ability which he showed,—nay, was not exceeded even by the manly boldness which won for that leader the most imperishable of all his titles to the admiration and gratitude of mankind.

The general narrowness of Sir Vicary Gibbs' mind has been marked; but on the side of vanity and self-conceit it was out of proportion to its dimensions in other parts. It always seemed as if no one could do anything to please him, save one individual; and *his* performances were rated at the most exorbitant value. Nay, the opinion of that favoured personage he estimated so highly, that there always lay an appeal to him from the bench, as well as from every other authority; and it was sometimes truly laughable to observe the weight which he attached to a single sentence or a word from one with whom he was ever so entirely satisfied. On a certain trial he had occasion to mention some recent victories of Lord Wellington's army in the Peninsula, and had named three battles with praise not very lavish, because every word was deemed of inestimable value, but had omitted Busaco; he corrected himself very ostentatiously, and went back to include that fight, with the feeling manifest to all who heard him, that real and irreparable, possibly fatal, injury would be done to the troops, had the momentary omission unhappily not been supplied. When he came among the heads of the law, whether in his own court or at occasional meetings of the twelve, even while junior puisne judge, he arrogated the place and deference due to the chief of the whole; and when he was made first Chief Baron, and afterwards Chief Justice, there were no bounds to his contempt for all the opinions of all his brethen, although it is an undeniable fact, that he was not nearly so much distinguished for the soundness of his opinions upon the bench as he had been for the excellence of his arguments at the bar. In trials at *Nisi Prius* he was distinguished for the little and peevish temper which predominated in him, often to the seeming injury of his judgment, almost always to the detriment of his judicial powers; and so absolutely was he persuaded of his own universal capacity, and the universal unfitness of others, that it was

no uncommon thing for him to ask, somewhat roughly, for a council's brief, that he might see what was intended to be stated; then lecture the attorney who had prepared it; soon after the witnesses; and down to the officers of the court, whose functions of keeping silence and order he would occasionally himself undertake to perform. So that it was not an uncommon remark, that the learned Chief Justice was performing at once in his own person, the offices of judge and jury, council for both parties, attorney for both, witness on both sides, and crier of the court. To the same conceited spirit was owing his much graver offence of parading rash opinions upon branches of the law with which the previous habits of his life had never brought him very familiarly acquainted, and even of forming hasty judgments upon matters to which he was more accustomed. Certain it is, that there were decisions, both of his own at *Nisi Prius*, and afterwards of the Court in Banc, which he persisted in forcing upon his brethren, and which do little credit to any of the parties concerned in them.

The survey which has just been taken of this eminent councillor does not show him as filling the highest places in his profession; and yet if we follow him into the House of Commons, the falling off is very great indeed. There he really had no place at all; and feeling his nullity, there was no place to which he was with more visible reluctance dragged by the power that office gives the government over its lawyers. He could only obtain a hearing upon legal questions, and those he handled not with such felicity or force as repaid the attention of the listener. He seldom attempted more than to go through the references from one act of parliament to another; and though he was doing only a mechanical work, he gave out each sentence as if he had been consulted and gifted like an oracle, and looked and spoke as if when citing a section he was making a discovery. When Mr. Perceval was shot, his nerves, formerly excellent, suddenly and entirely failed him; and he descended from the station of Attorney-General to that of a Puisne Judge in the Common Pleas.

Of his political prejudices, which were quite intolerant and quite sincere, mention has already been made. To the cause of reform in all its shapes, and under what name soever, he was the bitter enemy. Towards all who indulged in free discussion, whether of measures or of men, he was an implacable adversary. The Press, therefore, engaged a large share of his dislike; and under the combined influence of exasperation and alarm he filed so many *ex officio* informations in a few months, that no two attorney-generals ever in a long course of years loaded the files of the court with as many. It was his truly painful fortune that, as most of these regarded the attacks on the Duke of York, he was compelled soon to withdraw them

all; while in several of the others he was defeated; and partly by his excessive use of the power, partly by his failure in the exercise of it, he had the agony, to him most excruciating, of both being signally defeated in his attempts to crush the press, and of causing all the discussions of the *ex officio* power which first brought it into hatred and then into disuse.

This is that successful barrister, that skilful special pleader, that acute lawyer on common points, that dexterous and expert practitioner (for all this he was as certainly as he was a little-minded man), —this is he whom the men that contemn Lord Erskine, and look down upon Lord Mansfield, and would fain, if they durst, raise their small voices against Sir Samuel Romilly, hold up as the pattern of an English lawyer.

SIR WILLIAM GRANT.

If from contemplating the figure of the eminent, though narrow-minded lawyer whom we have been surveying, we turn to that of his far more celebrated contemporary, Sir William Grant, we shall find, with some marked resemblances, chiefly in political opinions and exaggerated dread of change, a very marked diversity in all the more important features of character, whether intellectual or moral. We have now named in some respects the most extraordinary individual of his time—one certainly than whom none ever better sustained the judicial office, though its functions were administered by him upon a somewhat contracted scale—one than whom none ever descended from the forum into the senate with more extraordinary powers of argumentation, or flourished there with greater renown. It happened to this great judge to have been for many years at the bar with a very moderate share of practice; and although his parliamentary exertions never tore him away from his profession, yet his public character rested entirely upon their success until he was raised to the bench.

The genius of the man then shone forth with extraordinary lustre. His knowledge of law, which had hitherto been scanty and never enlarged by practice, was now expanded to whatever dimensions might seem required for performing his high office; nor was he ever remarked as at all deficient even in the branch most difficult to master without forensic habits, the accomplishments of a case-lawyer; while his familiarity with the principles of jurisprudence and his knowledge of their foundations, was ample as his application of them was easy and masterly. The Rolls Court, however, in those

days was one of comparatively contracted business; and although he gave the most entire satisfaction there, and in presiding at the Privy Council in Prize and Plantation Appeals, a doubt was always raised by the admirers of Lord Eldon, whether Sir William Grant could have as well answered the larger demands upon his judicial resources, had he presided in the Court of Chancery. That doubt appears altogether unfounded. He possessed the first great quality for dispatching business (the "*real*" and not "*affected dispatch*" of Lord Bacon), a power of steadily fixing his attention upon the matter before him, and keeping it invariably directed towards the successive arguments addressed to him. The certainty that not a word was lost deprived the advocate of all excuse for repetition; while the respect which his judge inspired checked needless prolixity, and deterred him from raising desperate points merely to have them frowned down by a tribunal as severe as it was patient. He had not, indeed, to apprehend any interruption—that was a course never practised in those day at the Rolls or the Cockpit; but while the judge sat passive and unmoved, it was plain that, though his powers of endurance had no limits, his powers of discriminating were ever active as his attention was ever awake; and as it required an eminent hardihood to place base coin before so scrutinising an eye, or tender light money to be weighed in such accurate scales as Sir William Grant's, so few men ventured to exercise a patience which yet all knew to be unbounded. It may, indeed, be fairly doubted whether the main force of muscular exertion, so much more clumsily applied by Sir John Leach in the same court to effect the great object of his efforts—the close compression of the debate—ever succeeded so well, or reduced the mass to as small a bulk as the delicate hydraulic press of his illustrious predecessor did, without giving the least pain to the advocate, or in any one instance obstructing the course of calm, deliberate, and unwearied justice.

The court in those days presented a spectacle which afforded true delight to every person of sound judgment and pure taste. After a long and a silent hearing—a hearing of all that could be urged by the council of every party—unbroken by a single word, and when the spectator of Sir William Grant (for he was not heard) might suppose that his mind had been absent from a scene in which he took no apparent share, the debate was closed—the advocate's hour was passed—the parties were in silent expectation of the event—the hall no longer resounded with any voice—it seemed as if the affair of the day, for the present, was over, and the Court was to adjourn or to call for another cause. No! the judge's time had now arrived, and another artist was to fill the scene. The great Magistrate began to pronounce his judgment, and every eye and every ear was at length fixed upon the bench. Forth came a strain of

clear unbroken fluency, disposing alike, in most luminous order, of all the facts and of all the arguments in the cause; reducing into clear and simple arrangement, the most entangled masses of broken and conflicting statement; weighing each matter, and disposing of each in succession; settling one doubt by a parenthetical remark; passing over another difficulty by a reason only more decisive that it was condensed; and giving out the whole impression of the case, in every material view, upon the judge's mind, with argument enough to show why he so thought, and to prove him right, and without so much reasoning as to make you forget that it was a judgment you were hearing, by overstepping the bounds which distinguish a Judgment from a speech. This is the perfection of Judicial Eloquence; not avoiding argument, but confining it to such reasoning as beseems him who has rather to explain the grounds of his own conviction, than to labour at convincing others; not rejecting reference to authority, but never betokening a disposition to seek shelter behind other men's names for what he might fear to pronounce in his own person; not disdaining even ornaments, but those of the more chastened graces that accord with the severe standard of a judge's oratory. This perfection of judicial eloquence Sir William Grant attained, and its effect upon all listeners was as certain and as powerful as its merits were incontestable and exalted.

In parliament he is unquestionably to be classed with speakers of the first order. His style was peculiar; it was that of the closest and severest reasoning ever heard in any popular assembly; a reasoning which would have been reckoned close in the argumentation of the bar or the dialectics of the schools. It was, from the first to the last, throughout, pure reason and the triumph of pure reason. All was sterling, all perfectly plain; there was no point in the diction, no illustration in the topics, no ornament of fancy in the accompaniments. The language was choice—perfectly clear, abundantly correct, quite concise, admirably suited to the matter which the words clothed and conveyed. In so far it was felicitous, no farther; nor did it ever leave behind it any impression of the diction, but only of the things said; the words were forgotten, for they had never drawn off the attention for a moment from the things; those things were alone remembered. No speaker was more easily listened to; none so difficult to answer. Once Mr. Fox, when he was hearing him with a view to making that attempt, was irritated in a way very unwonted to his sweet temper by the conversation of some near him, even to the show of some crossness, and (after an exclamation) sharply said, "Do you think it so very pleasant a thing to have to answer a speech like THAT?" The two memorable occasions on which this great reasoner was observed to

be most injured by a reply, were in that of Mr. Wilberforce quoting Clarendon's remarks on the conduct of the judges in the Ship Money Case, when Sir William Grant had undertaken to defend his friend Lord Melville; and in that of Lord Lansdowne (then Lord Henry Petty), three years later, when the legality of the famous orders in council was debated. Here, however, the speech was made on one day, and the answer, able and triumphant as it was, followed on the next.

It may safely be said that a long time will elapse before there shall arise such a light to illuminate either the Senate or the Bench, as the eminent person whose rare excellence we have just been pausing to contemplate. That excellence was no doubt limited in its sphere: there was no imagination, no vehemence, no declamation, no wit; but the sphere was the highest, and in that highest sphere its place was lofty. The understanding alone was addressed by the understanding; the faculties that distinguish our nature were those over which the oratory of Sir William Grant asserted its control. His sway over the rational and intellectual portion of mankind was that of a more powerful reason, a more vigorous intellect than theirs; a sway which no man had cause for being ashamed of admitting, because the victory was won by superior force of argument; a sway which the most dignified and exalted genius might hold without stooping from its highest pinnacle, and which some who might not deign to use inferior arts of persuasion, could find no objection whatever to exercise.

Yet in this purely intellectual picture, there remains to be noted a discrepancy, a want of keeping, something more than a shade. The commanding intellect, the close reasoner, who could overpower other men's understanding by the superior force of his own, was the slave of his own prejudices to such an extent, that he could see only the perils of revolution in any reformation of our institutions, and never conceived it possible that the monarchy could be safe, or that anarchy could be warded off, unless all things were maintained upon the same footing on which they stood in early, unenlightened, and inexperienced ages of the world. The signal blunder, which Bacon long ago exposed, of confounding the youth with the age of the species, was never committed by any one more glaringly than by this great reasoner. He it was who first employed the well-known phrase of "the wisdom of our ancestors;" and the menaced innovation, to stop which he applied it, was the proposal of Sir Samuel Romilly to take the step of reform almost imperceptibly small, of subjecting men's real property to the payment of all their debts. Strange force of early prejudice; of prejudice suffered to warp the intellect while yet feeble and uninformed, and which owed its origin to the very error that it embodied in its conclusions,

the making the errors of mankind in their ignorant and inexperienced state, the guide of their conduct at their mature age, and appealing to those errors as the wisdom of past times, when they were the unripe fruit of imperfect intellectual culture.

MR. BURKE.

THE contrast which Lord Mansfield presented to another school of lawyers, led us to present, somewhat out of its order, the character of Sir Vicary Gibbs as representing the latter class, and from thence we were conducted, by way of contrast (by the association, as it were, of contrariety), to view the model of a perfect judge in Sir William Grant. It is time that we now return to the group of Statesmen collected round Lord North. His supporters being chiefly lawyers, we were obliged to make our incursion into Westminster Hall. When we turn to his opponents, we emerge from the learned obscurity of the black letter precincts to the more cheerful, though not less contentious, regions of political men; and the first figure which attracts the eye is the grand form of Edmund Burke.

How much soever men may differ as to the soundness of Mr. Burke's doctrines, or the purity of his public conduct, there can be no hesitation in according to him a station among the most extraordinary persons that ever appeared; nor is there now any diversity of opinion as to the place which it is fit to assign him. He was a writer of the first class, and excelled in almost every kind of prose composition. Possessed of most extensive knowledge, and of the most various description; acquainted alike with what different classes of men knew, each in his own province, and with much that hardly any one ever thought of learning; he could either bring his masses of information to bear directly upon the subjects to which they severally belonged—or he could avail himself of them generally to strengthen his faculties and enlarge his views—or he could turn any portion of them to account for the purpose of illustrating his theme, or enriching his diction. Hence, when he is handling any one matter, we perceive that we are conversing with a reasoner or a teacher, to whom almost every other branch of knowledge is familiar. His views range over all the cognate subjects; his reasonings are derived from principles applicable to other matters as well as the one in hand; arguments pour in from all sides, as well as those which start up under our feet, the natural growth of the path he is leading us over; while to throw light round our steps, and either explore its darker places, or serve for our recreation, illustrations

are fetched from a thousand quarters; and an imagination, marvellously quick to descry unthought-of resemblances, pours forth the stores, which a lore yet more marvellous has gathered from all ages, and nations, and arts, and tongues. We are, in respect of the argument, reminded of Bacon's multifarious knowledge, and the exuberance of his learned fancy; while the many-lettered diction recalls to mind the first of English poets, and his immortal verse, rich with the spoils of all sciences and all times.

The kinds of composition are various, and he excels in them all, with the exception of two, the very highest, given but to few, and when given, almost always possessed alone,—fierce, nervous, overwhelming declamation, and close, rapid argument. Every other he uses easily, abundantly, and successfully. He produced but one philosophical treatise; but no man lays down abstract principles more soundly, or better traces their application. All his works, indeed, even his controversial, are so informed with general reflections, so variegated with speculative discussion, that they wear the air of the Lyceum as well as the Academy. His narrative is excellent; and it is impossible more luminously to expose the details of a complicated subject, to give them more animation and interest, if dry in themselves, or to make them bear, by the mere power of statement, more powerfully upon the argument. In description he can hardly be surpassed, at least for effect; he has all the qualities that conduce to it—ardour of purpose, sometimes rising into violence —vivid, but too luxuriant fancy—bold, frequently extravagant, conception—the faculty of shedding over mere inanimate scenery the light imparted by moral associations. He indulges in bitter invective, mingled with poignant wit, but descending often to abuse and even scurrility; he is apt moreover to carry an attack too far, as well as to strain the application of a principle; to slay the slain, or, dangerously for his purpose, to mingle the reader's contempt with pity.

As in the various kinds of writing, so in the different styles, he had an almost universal excellence, one only being deficient, the plain and unadorned. Not but that he could, in unfolding a doctrine or pursuing a narrative, write for a little with admirable simplicity and propriety; only he could not sustain this self-denial; his brilliant imagination and well-stored memory soon broke through the restraint. But in all other styles, passages without end occur of the highest order—epigram—pathos—metaphor in profusion, chequered with more didactic and sober diction. Nor are his purely figurative passages the finest even as figured writing; he is best when the metaphor is subdued, mixed as it were with plainer matter to flavour it, and used not by itself, and for its own sake, but giving point to a more useful instrument, made of more ordinary material; or at the

most, flung off by the heat of composition, like sparks from a working engine, not fire-works for mere display. Speaking of the authors of the Declaration of Right, he calls them "those whose penetrating style has engraved in our ordinances and in our hearts, the words and spirit of that immortal law." * So, discoursing of the imitations of natural magnitude by artifice and skill—"A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators, and effect the noblest designs by easy methods." † "When pleasure is over we relapse into indifference, or rather we fall into a soft tranquillity, which is tinged with the agreeable colour of the former sensation." ‡—"Every age has its own manners, and its politics dependent on them; and the same attempts will not be made against a constitution fully formed and matured, that were used to destroy it in the cradle, or resist its growth during its infancy." §—"Faction will make its cries resound through the nation, as if the whole were in an uproar." ** In works of a serious nature, upon the affairs of real life, as political discourses and orations, figurative stile should hardly ever go beyond this. But strict and close metaphor or simile may be allowed, provided it be most sparingly used, and never deviate from the subject matter, so as to make that disappear in the ornament. "The judgment is for the greater part employed in throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of the imagination (says Mr. Burke), in dissipating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down to the disagreeable yoke of our reason." †† He has here at once expressed figuratively the principle we are laying down, and illustrated our remark by the temperance of his metaphors, which, though mixed, do not offend, because they come so near mere figurative language that they may be regarded, like the last set of examples, rather as forms of expression than tropes. "A great deal of the furniture of ancient tyranny is worn to rags; the rest is entirely out of fashion" ‡‡ —a most apt illustration of his important position, that we ought to be as jealous of little encroachments, now the chief sources of danger, as our ancestors were of 'Ship Money' and the 'Forest Laws.' "A species of men (speaking of one constant and baneful effect of grievances), to whom a state of order would become a sentence of obscurity, are nourished into a dangerous magnitude by the heat of intestine disturbances; and it is no wonder that, by a sort of sinister piety, they cherish, in return, those disorders which are the parents of all their consequence."§§—"We have not (he says of the English Church Establishment) relegated religion to obscure municipalities or rustic

* Reflections on the French Revolution.
† Sublime and Beautiful, II. § 10.
‡ Ibid. I. § 3.
§ Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.
** Ibid.
†† Discourses on Taste.
‡‡ Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.
§§ Ibid.

villages—No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments." * But if these should seem so temperate as hardly to be separate figures, the celebrated comparison of the Queen of France, though going to the verge of chaste style, hardly passes it. "And surely, never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy." †

All his writings, but especially his latter ones, abound in examples of the abuse of this style, in which, unlike those we have been dwelling upon with unmixed admiration, the subject is lost sight of, and the figure usurps its place, almost as much as in Homer's longer similes, and is oftentimes pursued, not merely with extravagance and violence, but into details that offend by their coarseness, as well as their forced connexion with the matter in question. The comparison of a noble adversary to the whale, in which the grantee of the crown is altogether forgotten, and the fish alone remains; of one Republican ruler to a cannibal in his den, where he paints him as having actually devoured a king and suffering from indigestion; of another, to a retailer of dresses, in which character the nature of constitutions is forgotten in that of millinery,—are instances too well known to be further dwelt upon; and they were the produce, not of the "audacity of youth," but of the last years of his life. It must, however, be confessed, that he was at all times somewhat apt to betray what Johnson imputes to Swift, a proneness to "revolve ideas from which other minds shrink with disgust." At least he must be allowed to have often mistaken violence and grossness for vigour. "The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preserve a galling wakefulness, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to administer the opiate potion of animosity, powdered with all the ingredients of scorn and contempt," etc. ‡—"They are not repelled through a fastidious delicacy at the stench of their arrogance and presumption, from a medicinal attention to their mental blotches and running sores." § —"Those bodies, which, when full of life and beauty, lay in their arms, and were their joy and comfort, when dead and putrid, became but the more loathsome from remembrance of former endearments?" **—"The vital powers, wasted in an unequal struggle, are pushed back upon themselves, and fester to gangrene, to death; and instead of what was but just now the delight of the creation, there will be cast out in the face of the sun, a bloated, putrid, noisome

* Reflections on the French Revolution. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.
** Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.

carcase, full of stench and poison, an offence, a horror, a lesson to the world." * Some passages are not fit to be cited, and could not now be tolerated in either house of parliament, for the indecency of their allusion—as in the Regency debates, and the attack upon lawyers on the Impeachment Continuation. But the finest of his speeches, which we have just quoted from, though it does not go so far from propriety, falls not much within its bounds. Of Mr. Dundas he says, "With six great chopping bastards (*Reports of Secret Committee*), each as lusty as an infant Hercules, this delicate creature blushes at the sight of his new bridegroom, assumes a virgin delicacy; or to use a more fit as well as a more poetical comparison, the person so squeamish, so timid, so trembling, lest the winds of heaven should visit too roughly, is expanded to broad sunshine, exposed like the sow of imperial augury, lying in the mud with all the prodigies of her fertility about her, as evidence of her delicate amour."

It is another characteristic of this great writer, that the unlimited abundance of his stores makes him profuse in their expenditure. Never content with one view of a subject, or one manner of handling it, he for the most part lavishes his whole resources upon the discussion of each point. In controversy this is emphatically the case. Indeed, nothing is more remarkable than the variety of ways in which he makes his approaches to any position he would master. After reconnoitring it with skill and boldness, if not with perfect accuracy, he manœuvres with infinite address, and arrays a most imposing force of general principles mustered from all parts, and pointed, sometimes violently enough, in one direction. He now moves on with the composed air, the even, dignified pace of the historian; and unfolds his facts in a narrative so easy, and yet so correct, that you plainly perceive he wanted only the dismissal of other pursuits to have rivalled Livy or Hume. But soon this advance is interrupted, and he stops to display his powers of description, when the boldness of his design is only matched by the brilliancy of his colouring. He then skirmishes for a space, and puts in motion all the lighter arms of wit; sometimes not unmingled with drollery, sometimes bordering upon farce. His main battery is now opened, and a tempest bursts forth, of every weapon of attack—invective, abuse, irony, sarcasm, simile drawn out to allegory, allusion, quotation, fable, parable, anathema. The heavy artillery of powerful declamation, and the conflict of close argument alone are wanting; but of this the garrison is not always aware; his noise is oftentimes mistaken for the thunder of true eloquence; the number of his movements distracts, and the variety of his missiles annoys the adversary; a panic spreads, and he carries his point, as if he had actually

* Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.

made a practicable breach; nor is it discovered till after the smoke and confusion is over, that the citadel remains untouched.

Every one of Mr. Burke's works that is of any importance, presents, though in different degrees, these features to the view; from the most chaste and temperate, his "Thought on the Discontents," to the least faultless and severe; his richer and more ornate, as well as vehement tracts upon revolutionary politics; his letters on the "Regicide Peace," and "Defence of his Pension." His speeches differed not at all from his pamphlets; these are written speeches, or those are spoken dissertations, according as any one is over-studious of method and closeness in a book, or of ease and nature in an oration.

The principal defects here hinted at are a serious derogation from merit of the highest order in both kinds of composition. But in his spoken eloquence, the failure which it is known attended him for a great part of his Parliamentary life, is not to be explained by the mere absence of what alone he wanted to equal the greatest of orators. In fact, he was deficient in judgment; he regarded not the degree of interest felt by his audience in the topics which deeply occupied himself; and seldom knew when he had said enough on those which affected them as well as him. He was admirable in exposition; in truth, he delighted to give instruction both when speaking and conversing, and in this he was unrivalled. *Quis in sententiis argutior? in docendo edisserendoque subtilior?* Mr. Fox might well avow, without a compliment, that he had learnt more from him alone than from all other men and authors. But if any one thing is proved by unvarying experience of popular assemblies, it is, that an excellent dissertation makes a poor speech. The speaker is not the only person actively engaged while a great oration is pronouncing; the audience have their share; they must be excited, and for this purpose constantly appealed to as recognised persons of the drama. The didactic orator (if, as has been said of the didactic poet, this be not a contradiction in terms) has it all to himself; the hearer is merely passive; and the consequence is, he soon ceases to be a listener, and if he can, even to be a spectator. Mr. Burke was essentially didactic, except when the violence of his invective carried him away, and then he offended the correct taste of the House of Commons, by going beyond the occasion, and by descending to coarseness. * When he argued, it was by unfolding

* The charge of coarseness, or rather of vulgarity of language, has, to the astonishent of all who knew him, and understood pure idiomatic English, been made against Mr. Windham, but only by persons unacquainted with both. To him might nearly be applied the beautiful sketch of Crassus by M. Tullius—Quo, says he, nihil statuo fieri potuisse perfectius. Erat summa gravitas, erat cum gravitate junctus, facetiarum et urbanitatis oratorius, non scurrilis lepos. Latine loquendi

large views, and seizing upon analogies too remote, and drawing distinctions "too fine for his hearers," or, at the best, by a body of statements, lucid, certainly, and diversified with flower and fruit and lighted up with pleasantry, but almost always in excess, and overdone in these qualities as well as in its own substance. He had little power of hard stringent reasoning, as has been already remarked; and his declamation was addressed to the head, as from the head it proceeded, learned, fanciful, ingenious, but not impassioned. Of him, as a combatant, we may say what Aristotle did of the old philosophers, when he compared them to unskilful boxers, who hit round about, and not straight forward, and fight with little effect, though they may by chance sometimes deal a hard blow.—*Οἷον ἐν ταῖς μαχαῖς οἱ ἀγυμνάστοι ποιοῦσι. Καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι περιφερόμενοι τυπτουσι πολλάκις καλὰς ἀλλ' οὐτ' ἐκεῖνοι ἀπ' ἐπιστήμης.*—(*Metaphys.*) *

Cicero has somewhere called Eloquence *copiose loquens sapientia.* This may be true of written, but of spoken eloquence it is a defective definition, and will, at the best, only comprehend the Demonstrative (or Epideictic) kind, which is banished, for want of an audience, from all modern assemblies of a secular description. Thus, though it well characterises Mr. Burke, yet the defects which we have pointed out were fatal to his success. Accordingly the test of eloquence, which the same master has in so picturesque a manner given, from his own constant experience, here entirely failed.—"Volo hoc oratori contingat, ut cum auditum sit eum esse dicturum, locus in subselliis occupetur, compleatur tribunal, gratiosi scribæ sint in dando et cedendo locum, corona multiplex, judex erectus; cum surgit is, qui dicturus sit, significetur a corona silentium, deinde crebræ assensiones, multæ admirationes: risus, cum velit; cum velit, fletus; ut, qui hæc procul videat, etiamsi quid agatur nesciat, at placere tamen, et in scena Roscium intelligat." For many years, that is, between the latter part of the American war, and the speeches

accurata, et sine molestiâ diligens elegantia—in disserendo mira explicatio; cum de jure civili, cum de æquo et bono disputaretur argumentorum et similitudinum copia. Let not the reader reject even the latter features, those certainly of an advocate; at least let him first read Mr. Windham's Speech on the Law of Evidence, in the Duke of York's case.

* The Attic reader will be here reminded of the First Philippic, in which a very remarkable passage, and in part too applicable to our subject, seems to have been suggested by the passage in the next; and its great felicity both of apt comparison and of wit, should, with many other passages, have made critics pause before they denied those qualities to the chief of orators. *Ὥσπερ δὲ οἱ βαρβαροι πυκτεύουσιν, οὕτω πολεμεῖτε Φιλίππῳ· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ὁ' πληγὰς ἀεὶ τῆς πληγῆς ἔχεται. καὶν ἴτερόσε παταξῃ τις, ἐκεῖσε εἰσὶ αἱ χεῖρες. προβαλλεσθαι δ', ἢ βλέπειν ἐναντίον, οὐτ' οἶδεν, οὐτ' ἐθέλει*—which he proceeds to illustrate by the conduct held respecting the Chersonese and Thermopylæ.

which he made, neither many nor long, nor in a very usual or regular style, on the French Revolution, the very reverse of all this was to be seen and lamented, as often as Mr. Burke spoke. The spectator saw no signs of Roscius being in action, but rather of the eminent Civilian so closely allied to Mr. Burke, and of whom we are hereafter to speak.* "Videt" (as the same critic has, in another passage, almost to the letter described it) "oscitantem judicem, loquentem cum altero, nonnunquam etiam circulantem, mittentem ad horas; quæsitorem, ut dimittat, rogantem;† intelligit, oratorem in ea causa non adesse, qui possit animis judicum admovere orationem, tanquam fidibus manum."

But it may be justly said, with the second of Attic orators, that sense is always more important than eloquence; and no one can doubt that enlightened men in all ages will hang over the works of Mr. Burke, and dwell with delight even upon the speeches that failed to command the attention of those to whom they were addressed. Nor is it by their rhetorical beauties that they interest us. The extraordinary depth of his detached views, the penetrating sagacity which he occasionally applies to the affairs of men and their motives, and the curious felicity of expression with which he unfolds principles, and traces resemblances and relations, are separately the gift of few, and in their union probably without any example. This must be admitted on all hands; it is possibly the last of these observations which will obtain universal assent, as it is the last we have to offer before coming upon disputed ground, where the fierce contentions of politicians cross the more quiet path of the critic.

Not content with the praise of his philosophical acuteness, which all are ready to allow, the less temperate admirers of this great writer have ascribed to him a gift of genius approaching to the power of divination, and have recognised him as in possession of a judgment so acute and so calm withal, that its decision might claim the authority of infallible decrees. His opinions upon French affairs have been viewed as always resulting from general principles deliberately applied to each emergency; and they have been looked upon as forming a connected system of doctrines, by which his own sentiments and conduct were regulated, and from which after times may derive the lessons of practical wisdom.

A consideration which at once occurs, as casting suspicion upon the soundness, if not also upon the severity, of these encomiums, is, that they never were dreamt of until the questions arose concerning the French Revolution; and yet, if well founded, they were due to the former principles and conduct of their object; for it is wholly in-

* Dr. Lawrence.

† This desire in the English senate is irregularly signified, by the cries of "Question," there not being a proper quarter to appeal to, as in the Roman Courts.

consistent with their tenor to admit that the doctrines so extolled were the rank and sudden growth of the heats which the changes of 1789 had generated. Their title to so much admiration and to our implicit confidence must depend upon their being the slowly matured fruit of a profound philosophy, which had investigated and compared; pursuing the analogies of things, and tracing events to their remote origin in the principles of human nature. Yet it is certain that these reasoners (if reasoning can indeed be deemed their vocation) never discovered a single merit in Mr. Burke's opinions, or anything to praise, or even endure, in his conduct, from his entrance into public life in 1765, to the period of that stormy confusion of all parties and all political attachments, which took place in 1791, a short time before he quitted it. They are therefore placed in a dilemma from which it would puzzle subtler dialecticians to escape. Either they or their idol have changed; either they have received a new light, or he is a changeling god. They are either converts to a faith which, for so many years and during so many vicissitudes, they had, in their preachings and in their lives, held to be damnable; or they are believers in a heresy, lightly taken up by its author, and promulgated to suit the wholly secular purposes of some particular season.

We believe a very little examination of the facts will suffice to show that the believers have been more consistent than their oracle; and that they escape from the charge of fickleness at the expense of the authority due to the faith last proclaimed from his altar. It would, indeed, be difficult to select one leading principle or prevailing sentiment in Mr. Burke's latest writings, to which something extremely adverse may not be found in his former, we can hardly say his early works; excepting only on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, to which, with all the friends of Lord Rockingham, he was from the beginning adverse; and in favour of which he found so very hesitating and lukewarm a feeling among Mr. Fox's supporters, as hardly amounted to a difference, certainly offered no inducements to compromise the opinions of his own party. Searching after the monuments of altered principles, we will not resort to his first works, in one of which he terms Damien "a late unfortunate regicide," looking only at his punishment, and disregarding his offence; neither shall we look into his speeches, exceeding, as they did, the bounds which all other men, even in the heat of debate, prescribe to themselves, in speaking now of the first magistrate of the country, while labouring under a calamitous visitation of Providence—now of kings generally. But we fairly take as the standard of his opinions, best weighed and most deliberately pronounced, the calmest of all his productions, and the most fully considered,—given to the world when he had long passed the middle age of life, had filled a high sta-

tion, and been for years eminent in parliamentary history.* Although, in compositions of this kind, more depends upon the general tone of a work than on particular passages, because the temper of mind on certain points may be better gathered from that, than from any expressly stated propositions, yet we have but to open the book to see that his *Thoughts* in 1770, were very different from those which breathe through every page of his Anti-Jacobin writings. And first of the Corinthian Capital of 1790—"I am no friend," says he in 1770, "to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the constitution, I should be free to declare, that if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form, than" lost in that austere and insolent domination." (*Works*, II. 246.) His comfort is derived from the consideration, "that the generality of peers are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their proper dignity, and run headlong into an abject servitude." Next of "the Swinish Multitude"—"When popular discontents have been very prevalent it may be well affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, not their crime. But with the governing part of the state it is far otherwise;" and he quotes the saying of Sully: "Pour la populace, ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir." (*Ib.* 224.) Again, of the people as "having nothing to do with the laws but to obey them"—"I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives, but *the interposition of the body of the people itself*,† whenever it shall appear by some flagrant and notorious act,—by some capital innovation,—that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law, and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy. But if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be used; to be used then only when it is evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles. It is not in Parliament alone that the remedy for parliamentary disorders can be completed; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for judging more systematically upon their conduct ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured." (*Ib.* 324.) The reasons which called for po-

* The Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents was published in 1770—when Mr. Burke was above 40 years old.

† Ital. in orig.

pular interposition, and made him preach it at a season of unprecedented popular excitement, are stated to be "the immense revenue, enormous debt, and mighty establishments;" and he requires the House of Commons "to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large;" adding, that "it would be a more natural and tolerable evil, that the House should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors." Now let us step aside for a moment to remark, that the "*immense revenue*" was under 10 millions; the "*enormous debt*," 130; and the "*mighty establishments*," cost about 6 millions a-year. The statesman who, on this account, recommended popular interference in 1770, lived to see the revenue 24 millions; the debt, 350; the establishment, 30; and the ruling principle of his latter days was the all-sufficiency of Parliament and the Crown, and the fatal consequence of according to the people the slightest share of direct power in the state.

His theoretical view of the constitution in those days was as different from the high monarchical tone of his latter writings. The King was then "the representative of the people,"—"so," he adds, "are the Lords; so are the Judges; they are all trustees for the people, as well as the Commons, because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, will originate from the people." And then comes that immortal passage so often cited, and which ought to be blazoned in letters of fire over the porch of the Commons' House, illustrating the doctrine it sets out with, that "their representatives are a control *for* the people, and not *upon* the people; and that the virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nations." (*Ib.* 228.)* It may be superfluous to add, that one so deeply embued with the soundest principles of a free constitution, must always have regarded the Bourbon

* "A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy; an anxious care of public money; an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint; these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons and a petitioning nation; a House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair; in the utmost harmony with ministers whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account; who in all disputes between the people and the administration, pronounce against the people; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in the constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate; but it is not to any popular purpose a House of Commons."—(*Ib.* 289.)

rulers with singular dislike, while he saw in the English government the natural ally of Liberty, wheresoever she was struggling with her chains. Accordingly, in the same famous work, he exclaims, "Such was the conquest of Corsica, by the professed enemies of the freedom of mankind, in defiance of those who were formerly its professed defenders." (*Ibid.* 272.)

Although it cannot be denied that a considerable portion of the deference which Mr. Burke's later and more celebrated opinions are entitled to command is thus taken away, and, as it were, shared by the conflicting authority of his earlier sentiments, his disciples may, nevertheless, be willing to rest his claims to a reverent, if not an implicit, observance upon the last, as the maturest efforts of his genius. Now, it appears evident that, in this extraordinary person, the usual progress of the faculties in growth and decline was in some measure reversed; his fancy became more vivid,—it burnt, as it were, brighter before its extinction; while age, which had only increased that light, lessened the power of profiting from it, by weakening the judgment as the imagination gained luxuriance and strength. Thus, his old age resembled that of other men in one particular only; he was more haunted by fears, and more easily became the dupe of imposture as well as alarm.

It is quite vain now to deny, that the unfavourable decision which those feelings led him to form of the French Revolution, was, in the main, incorrect and exaggerated. That he was right in expecting much confusion and mischief from the passions of a whole nation let loose, and influenced only by the various mobs of its capital, literary and political, in the assemblies, the club-rooms, the theatre, and the streets, no one can doubt; and his apprehensions were certainly not shared by the body of his party. But beyond this very scanty and not very difficult portion of his predictions, it would be hard to show any signal instance of their fulfilment. Except in lamenting the excesses of the times of terror, and in admitting them to form a large deduction from the estimate of the benefits of the Revolution, it would be no easy matter to point out a single opinion of his which any rational and moderate man of the present day will avow. Those who claim for Mr. Burke's doctrines in 1790 the praise of a sagacity and foresight hardly human, would do well to recollect his speech on the Army Estimates of that year. It is published by himself, corrected,* and its drift is to show the uselessness of a large force, because "France must now be considered as expunged out of the system of Europe;" it expresses much doubt if she can ever resume her station "as a leading power;" anticipates the language of the rising gene-

* Works, vol. v. p. 1.

ration—*Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*; and decides that, at all events, her restoration to anything like a substantive existence, must, under a republic, be the work of much time. Scarce two years elapsed before this same France, without any change whatever in her situation, except the increase of the anarchy that had expunged her from the map, declared war on Austria, and in a few months more carried her conquests so much farther than Louis XIV. had done, when the firmness and judgment of King William opposed him, that Mr. Burke now said a universal league was necessary to avert her universal dominion, and that it was a question whether she would suffer any one throne to stand in Europe. The same eulogists of Mr. Burke's sagacity would also do well to recollect those yearly predictions of the complete internal ruin which for so long a period alternated with alarms at the foreign aggrandisement of the Republic; they all originated in his famous work—though it contains some prophecies too extravagant to be borrowed by his most servile imitators. Thus he contends that the population of France is irreparably diminished by the Revolution, and actually adopts a calculation which makes the distress of Paris require above two millions sterling for its yearly relief; a sum sufficient to pay each family above seventeen pounds, or to defray its whole expenditure in that country.

But on these grounds a further allowance is made, and a new deduction introduced, from the sum total of the deference paid to his authority. It is said that the sagacity and penetration which we are bid to reverence were never at fault, unless on points where strong feelings interfered. The proposition must be admitted, and without any qualification. But it leads not to an abatement merely—it operates a release of the whole debt of deference and respect. For one clever man's opinion is just as good as another's, if both are equally uninfluenced by passions and feelings of every kind. Nor must it be forgotten that on another subject as well as the French Revolution, Mr. Burke's prejudices warped his judgment. When strongly interested, he was apt to regard things in false colours and distorted shape. The fate of society for many years hung upon Hastings's Impeachment; during that period he exhausted as much vituperation upon the East Indians in this country as he afterwards did on the Jacobins; and he was not more ready to quarrel with Mr. Fox on a difference of opinion about France, than he had been a year before to attack Mr. Erskine with every weapon of personal and professional abuse, upon a slighter difference about the Abating of the Impeachment. Nay, after the Hastings question might have been supposed forgotten, or merged in the more recent controversy on French affairs, he deliberately enumerates among the causes of alarm at French principles, the prevalence of the East India in-

terest in England; ranks "Nabobs" with the Diplomatic Body all over Europe, as naturally and incurably Jacobin; and warns this country loudly and solemnly against suffering itself to be overthrown by a "Bengal junto."

The like infirmity of a judgment weakened, no doubt, by his temper, pursued him in his later years through the whole details of the question that excited him most, when France was the master topic. He is blinded to the impressions on his very senses, not by the "light shining inward," but by the heat of his passions. He sees not what all other men behold, but what he wishes to see, or what his prejudices and fantasies suggest; and having once pronounced a dogma, the most astounding contradictions that events can give him assail his mind, and even his senses, in vain. Early in 1790 he pronounced France extinguished, as regarded her external force. But at the end of 1793, when the second attempt to invade her had ended in the utter discomfiture of the assailants, when she was rioting in the successes of an offensive war, and had armed her whole people to threaten the liberties of Europe, he still sees in her situation nothing but "complete ruin, without the chance of resurrection," and still reckons that, when she recovers her nominal existence by a restoration of the monarchy, "it will be as much as all her neighbours can do, by a steady guarantee, to keep her upon her basis."* (Works, VII. 185.) That he should confound all persons, as well as things, in his extravagant speculations, surprises less than such delusions as this. We are little astonished at finding him repeatedly class the humane and chivalrous Lafayette with the monster Robespierre; but when we find him pursuing his theory, that all Atheists are Jacobins, so far as to charge Hume with being a leveller, and pressing the converse of the proposition so far as to insinuate that Priestley was an Atheist, we pause incredulous over the sad devastation which a disordered fancy can make in the finest understanding. (VII. 58.)

That the warlike policy which he recommended against France, was more consistent than the course pursued by the ministry, may be admitted. The weak and ruinous plan of leaving the enemy to conquer all Europe, while we wasted our treasure and our blood in taking Sugar Islands, to increase the African slave-trade, and mow down whole armies by pestilence, has been oftentimes painted in strong colours, never stronger than the truth; and our arms only were successful when this wretched system was abandoned. But if Mr. Burke faintly and darkly arraigned this plan of operations, it was on grounds so purely fanciful, and he dashed the truth with such

* She had at that time 750,000 men under arms, without calling out the second conscription.

a mixture of manifest error, that he unavoidably both prevented his councils from being respected, and subjected his own policy to imputations full as serious as those he brought against the government. He highly approved of the Emigration, because France was no longer in but out of France; he insisted on an invasion, for the avowed purpose of restoring monarchy, and punishing its enemies; he required the advanced guard of the attacking army to be composed of the bands of French gentlemen, emigrants, and to be accompanied by the exiled priests; and, in order to make the movement more popular, they were to be preceded by the proclamation of solemn leagues among the allies, never to treat with a republic that had slain its king, and formal announcements that they entered the country to punish as well as to restore.

Mr. Burke lived not to see the power of the revolutionary government extend itself resistless in the direction he had pronounced impossible, or prove harmless in the only way he deemed it formidable. The downfall of that government he lived not to see thrice accomplished, without one of his plans being followed. Yet let us not doubt his opinions upon the restoration of his favourite dynasty, had he survived its exile. With all his bright genius and solid learning, his venerable name would have been found at the head, or rather say in advance, of the most universally and most justly contemned faction in the world. The "Ultras" would have owned him for their leader, and would have admitted that he went beyond them in the uncompromising consistency of his extravagant dogmas. He who had deemed the kind of punishments that should be meted out, the most important point to settle previously, and had thought it necessary, in many a long and laboured page, to discuss this when the prospects of the Bourbons were desperate (VII. 187), and to guard them by all arguments against listening to plans of amnesty, would have objected vehemently to every one act of the restored government; regarded the *charter* as an act of abdication; the security of property as robbery and sacrilege; the impunity of the Jacobins, as making the monarch an accessary after the fact to his brother's murder; and what all men of sound minds regarded as a state of great improvement, blessing the country with much happiness, freeing it from many abuses, and giving it precious hopes of liberty, he would have pronounced the height of misery and degradation. If such had not proved to be his views, living in our times, he must have changed all the opinions which he professed up to the hour of his death.

Upon one subject alone could he have been found ranged with the Liberal party of the present day; he always, from a very early period, and before sound principles were disseminated on questions of

political economy, held the most enlightened opinions on all subject of mercantile policy; and these sound opinions he retained to the last; here his mind seemed warped by no bias, and his profound understanding and habits of observation kept him right. His works abound with just and original reflections upon these matters, and they form a striking contrast to the narrow views which, in his latter years, he was prone to take of all that touched the interest and the improvement of mankind. For his whole habits of thinking seemed perverted by the dread of change; and he never reflected, except in the single case of the Irish Catholics, that the surest way of bringing about a violent revolution is to resist a peaceful reform.

As he dreaded all plans of amendment which sought to work by perceivable agency and within a moderate compass of time, so he distrusted all who patronised them—asserting their conduct to be wild and visionary enthusiasm at the best, but generally imputing their zeal to some sinister motives of personal interest: most unjustly—most unphilosophically—most unthinkingly. It is the natural tendency of men connected with the upper ranks of society, and separated from the mass of the community, to undervalue things which only effect the rights or the interests of the people. Against this leaning to which he had yielded, it becomes them to struggle, and their honest devotion to the cause of peaceable improvement, their virtuous labours bestowed in advancing the dignity and happiness of their fellow-creatures, their perils and their losses encountered in defence of the rights of oppressed men, are the most glorious titles to the veneration of the good and the wise; but they are titles which he would have scornfully rejected, or covered with the tide of his indignant sarcasm, whom Providence had endowed with such rare parts, and originally imbued with such love of liberty, that he seemed especially raised up as an instrument for instructing and mending his kind.

Of Mr. Burke's genius as a writer and an orator, we have now spoken at great, though not needless length; and it would not have been necessary to dwell longer on the subject, but for a sketch of a very different kind lately drawn by another hand, from which a more accurate resemblance might have been expected. That Mr. Burke, with extraordinary powers of mind, cultivated to a wonderful degree, was a person of eccentric nature; that he was one mixture of incongruous extremes; that his opinions were always found to be on the outermost verge of those which could be held upon any question; that he was wholly wild and impracticable in his views; that he knew not what moderation or modification was in any doctrine which he advanced; but was utterly extravagant in whatever judgment he formed, and whatever sentiment he expressed;—such was the representation to which we have alluded, and which, considering the

distinguished quarter it proceeded from,* seems to justify some further remark; the rather, because we have already admitted the faults to exist in one portion of his opinions, which are now attempted to be affirmed respecting the whole. Without being followers of Mr. Burke's political principles, or indiscriminate admirers of his course as a statesman;—the capacity in which he the least shone, especially during the few latter and broken years of his illustrious, checkered, and care-worn life, we may yet affirm that with the exception of his writings upon the French Revolution—an exception itself to be qualified and restricted—it would be difficult to find any statesman of any age whose opinions were more habitually marked by moderation; by a constant regard to the results of actual experience, as well as the dictates of an enlarged reason; by a fixed determination always to be practical, at the time he was giving scope to the most extensive general views; by a cautious and prudent abstinence from all extremes, and especially from those towards which the general complexion of his political principles tending, he felt the more necessity for being on his guard against the seduction.

This was the distinguishing feature of his policy through life. A brilliant fancy and rich learning did not more characterise his discourse, than this moderation did his counsels. Imagination did not more inspire, or deep reflection inform his eloquence, than a wise spirit of compromise between theory and practice,—between all opposing extremes,—governed his choice of measures. This was by the extremes of both parties, but more especially of his own, greatly complained of; they could not always comprehend it, and they could never relish it, because their own understanding and information reached it not; and the selfish views of their meaner nature were thwarted by it. In his speeches, by the length at which he dwelt on topics, and the vehemence of his expressions, he was often deficient in judgment. But in the formation of his opinions no such defect could be perceived; he well and warily propounded all practical considerations; and although he viewed many subjects in different lights at the earlier and the later periods of his time, and is thus often quoted for opposite purposes by reasoners on different sides of the great political controversy, he himself never indulged in wild or thoughtless extremes. He brought this spirit of moderation into public affairs with him; and, if we except the very end of his life, when he had ceased to live much in public, it stuck by him to the last. "I pitched my Whiggism low," said he, "that I might keep by it." With his own followers his influence was supreme; and over such men as Dr. Lawrence, Mr. W. Elliott, and the late Lord Minto, to say nothing of the Ellises, the Freres and the Canningss,

* Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords, July, 1839.

no man of immoderate and extreme opinions ever could have retained this sway. Mr. Wilberforce compares their deference for him with the treatment of Ahitophel. "It was as if one meant to inquire of the oracle of the Lord." * Hear again the words of one who knew him well, for he had studied him much, and had been engaged in strenuous controversy against him. Speaking of the effects produced by his strong opinions respesting French affairs, Sir James Mackintosh, as justly as profoundly observed to Mr. Horner—"So great is the effect of a single inconsistency with the whole course of a long and wise political life, that the *greatest philosopher in practice* whom the world ever saw, passes with the superficial vulgar for a hot-brained enthusiast." Sir James Mackintosh never dreamt that all the temperate wisdom of the orations upon American affairs—all the profound and practical discretion which breathes over each page of the discussion upon the "Present Discontents"—all the truly enlarged principles of retrenchment, but tempered with the soundest and most rational views of each proposition's bearing upon the whole frame of our complicated government, which had made the celebrated speech upon "Economical Reform" the manual of every moderate and constitutional reformer—all the careful regard for facts, as well as abstract principles, the nice weighing of opposite arguments, the acute perception of practical consequences, which presided over his whole opinions upon commercial policy, especially on the questions connected with Scarcity and the Corn Laws—all the mingled firmness, humanity, soundness of practical judgment, and enlargement of speculative views, which governed his opinions upon the execution of the Criminal Law—all the spirit of reform and toleration, tempered with cautious circumspection of surrounding connexions, and provident foresight of possible consequences, which marked and moved his wise and liberal advice upon the affairs of the Irish hierarchy—that all would have been forgotten in the perusal of a few violent invectives, or exaggerated sentiments, called forth by the horrors of the French Revolution; which as his unrivalled sagacity had foreseen them, when the rest of his party, intoxicated with the victory over despotism, could not even look towards any consequences at all; so he not very unnaturally regarded as the end and consummation of that mighty event,—mistaking the turbulence by which the tempest and the flood were to clear the stream, for the perennial defilement of its waters.

Nor, though we have shown the repugnance of his earlier to his later opinions, must it after all be set down to the account of a heated imagination and an unsound judgment, that even upon the French Revolution he betrayed so much violence in his language,

* Life of Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 211.

and carried his opinions to a length which all men now deem extravagant; or that he at one time was so misled by the appearances of the hour as to dread the effacing of France from the map of Europe. We are now filling the safe and easy chair of him who judges after the event, and appeals to things as certainly known, which the veil of futurity concealed from them that went before. Every one must allow that the change which shook France to her centre and fixed the gaze of mankind was an event of prodigious magnitude; and that he who was called to form an opinion upon its import, and to foretell its consequences, and to shape his counsels upon the conduct to be pursued regarding it, was placed in circumstances wholly new; and had to grope his way without any light whatever from the experience of past times. Mr. Burke could only see mischief in it, view it on whatever side or from whatever point he would; and he regarded the consequences as pregnant with danger to all other countries, as well as to the one which he saw laid waste or about to be devastated by its progress. That for a time he saw right, no one now can affect to deny. When all else in this country could foresee nothing but good to France, from the great improvement so suddenly wrought in her institutions, he plainly told them that what they were pleased with viewing as the lambent flame of a fire-work was the glare of a volcanic explosion which would cover France and Europe with the ruins of all their institutions, and fill the air with Cimmerian darkness, through the confusion of which neither the useful light of day nor the cheering prospect of heaven could be descried. The suddenness of the improvement which delighted all else, to his sagacious and far-sighted eye, aided, doubtless, by the reflecting glass of past experience, and strengthened by the wisdom of other days in which it had been steeped, presented the very cause of distrust, and foreboding, and alarm. It was *because* his habit of mind was cautious and calculating,—not easily led away by a fair outside, not apt to run into extremes, given to sober reflection, and fond of correcting, by practical views and by the lessons of actual observation, the plausible suggestions of theory,—that he beheld with doubt and apprehension, Governments pulled down and set up in a day—Constitutions, the slow work of centuries, taken to pieces and re-constructed like an eight-day clock. He is not without materials, were he to retort the charge of easily running into extremes and knowing not where to stop, upon those who were instantly fascinated with the work of 1789, and could not look forward to the consequences of letting loose four-and-twenty millions of people from the control under which ages of submission to arbitrary rule and total disuse of civil rights had kept them. *They* are assuredly without the means of demonstrating *his* want of reflection and

foresight. For nearly the whole period during which he survived the commencement of the Revolution,—for five of those seven years, —all his predictions, save one momentary expression, had been more than fulfilled: anarchy and bloodshed had borne sway in France; conquest and convulsion had desolated Europe; and even when he closed his eyes upon earthly prospects, he left this portentous meteor, "with fear of change perplexing monarchs." The providence of mortals is not often able to penetrate so far as this into futurity. Nor can he whose mind was filled with such well-grounded alarms be justly impeached of violence, and held up as unsoundly given to extremes of opinion, if he betrayed an invincible repugnance to sudden revolutions in the system of policy by which nations are governed, and an earnest desire to see the restoration of the old state of things in France, as the harbinger of repose for the rest of the world.

That Mr. Burke did, however, err, and err widely in the estimate which he formed of the merits of a Restored Government, no one now can doubt. His mistake was in comparing the old *régime* with the anarchy of the Revolution; to which not only the monarchs of France, but the despotism of Turkey was preferable. He never could get rid of the belief that because the change had been effected with a violence which it produced, and inevitably produced the consequences foreseen by himself, and by him alone, therefore the tree so planted must for ever prove incapable of bearing good fruit. He forgot that after the violence, in its nature temporary, should subside, it might be both quite impossible to restore the old monarchy, and very possible to form a new, and orderly, and profitable government upon the ruins of the Republic. Above all, he had seen so much present mischief wrought to France during the convulsive struggle which was not over before his death, that he could not persuade himself of any possible good arising to her from the mighty change she had undergone. All this we now see clearly enough; having survived Mr. Burke forty years, and witnessed events which the hardiest dealers in prophecies assuredly could never have ventured to foretell. But we who were so blind to the early consequences of the Revolution, and who really did suffer ourselves to be carried away by extreme opinions, deaf to all Mr. Burke's warnings; we surely have little right to charge him with blind violence, unreflecting devotion to his fancy, and a disposition to run into extremes. At one time they who opposed his views were by many, perhaps by the majority of men, accused of this propensity. After the events in France had begun to affright the people of this country, when Mr. Burke's opinions were found to have been well grounded, the friends of liberty would not give up their fond belief that all must soon come

right. At that time we find Dean Milner writing to Mr. Wilberforce from Cambridge, that "Mr. Fox's old friends there all gave him up, and most of them said he was mad."*

In the imperfect estimate of this great man's character and genius which we have now concluded, let it not be thought that we have made any very large exceptions to the praise unquestionably his due. We have only abated claims preferred by his unheeding worshippers to more than mortal endowments—worshippers who with the true fanatical spirit adore their idol the more, as he proves the more unsafe guide; and who chiefly valued his peculiarities, when he happened to err on the great question that filled the latter years of his life. Enough will remain to command our admiration, after it shall be admitted that he who possessed the finest fancy, and the rarest knowledge, did not equally excel other men in retaining his sound and calm judgment at a season of peculiar emergency; enough to excite our wonder at the degree in which he was gifted with most parts of genius, though our credulity be not staggered by the assertion of a miraculous union of them all. We have been contemplating a great marvel certainly, not gazing on a supernatural sight; and we retire from it with the belief, that if acuteness, learning, imagination, so unmeasured, were never before combined, yet have there been occasionally witnessed in eminent men greater powers of close reasoning and fervid declamation, oftentimes a more correct taste, and on the question to which his mind was last and most earnestly applied, a safer judgment.

MR. FOX.

THE glory of Mr. Burke's career certainly was the American war, during which he led the Opposition in the House of Commons; until, having formed a successor more renowned than himself, he was succeeded rather than superseded in the command of that victorious band of the champions of freedom. This disciple, as he was proud to acknowledge himself, was Charles James Fox, one of the greatest statesmen, and if not the greatest orator, certainly the most accom-

* *Life of Wilberforce*, II. p. 3.—This was written early in the year 1793, when most men thought Mr. Burke both moderate and right. "There is scarce one of his (Mr. Fox's) old friends here at Cambridge who is not disposed to give him up, and most say he is mad. I think of him much as I always did; I still doubt whether he has bad principles, but I think it pretty plain he has none; and I suppose he is ready for whatever turns up." See, too, Lord Wellesley's justly celebrated speech, two years later, on French affairs. It is republished in Mr. Martin's edition of that great statesman's Despatches.

plished debater, that ever appeared upon the theatre of public affairs in any age of the world. To the profuse, the various learning of his master; to his profound and mature philosophy, he had no pretensions. His knowledge was confined to the ordinary accomplishments of an English education; intimate acquaintance with the classics; the exquisite taste which that familiarity bestows; and a sufficient knowledge of history. These stores he afterwards increased rather than diminished; for he continued to delight in classical reading; and added a minute and profound knowledge of modern languages, with a deep and accurate study of our own history, and the history of other modern states; insomuch, that it may be questioned, if any politician in any age ever knew so thoroughly the various interests, and the exact position of all the countries with which his own had dealings to conduct, or relations to maintain. Beyond these solid foundations of oratory, and ample stores of political information, his range did not extend. Of natural science, of metaphysical philosophy, of political economy, he had not even the rudiments; and he was apt to treat those matters with the neglect, if not the contempt, which ignorance can rather account for than excuse. He had come far too early into public life to be well grounded in a statesman's philosophy; like his great rival, and indeed like most aristocratic politicians, who were described as "rocked and dandled into legislators" by one,* himself exempt from this defective education; and his becoming a warm partisan at the same early age, also laid the foundation of another defect, the making party principle the only rule of conduct, and viewing every truth of political science through this distorting and discolouring medium.

But if such were the defects of his education, the mighty powers of his nature often overcame them, always threw them into the shade. A preternatural quickness of apprehension, which enabled him to see at a glance what cost other minds the labour of an investigation, made all attainments of an ordinary kind so easy, that it perhaps disinclined him to those which not even his acuteness and strength of mind could master without the pain of study. But he was sure as well as quick; and where the heat of passion, or the prejudice of party, or certain little peculiarities of a personal kind, —certain mental idiosyncrasies in which he indulged, and which produced capricious fancies or crotchets,—left his faculties unclouded and unstudied, no man's judgment was more sound, or could more safely be trusted. Then, his feelings were warm and kindly; his temper was sweet though vehement; like that of all the Fox family, his nature was generous, open, manly; above everything like dissimulation or duplicity; governed by the impulses of a great and be-

* Mr. Burke.

nevolent soul. This virtue, so much beyond all intellectual graces, yet bestowed its accustomed influence upon the faculties of his understanding, and gave them a reach of enlargement to which meaner natures are ever strangers. It was not more certain that such a mind as his should be friendly to religious toleration, eager for the assertion of civil liberty, the uncompromising enemy of craft and cruelty in all their forms, from the corruption of the Treasury and the severity of the penal code, up to the oppression of our American colonies and the African slave-traffic,—than that it should be enlarged and strengthened, made powerful in its grasp and consistent in its purpose, by the same admirable and amiable qualities which bent it always towards the right pursuit.

The great intellectual gifts of Mr. Fox, the robust structure of his faculties, naturally governed his oratory, made him singularly affect argument, and led him to a close grappling with every subject; despising all flights of imagination, and shunning everything collateral or discursive. This turn of mind, too, made him always careless of ornament, often negligent of accurate diction. There never was a greater mistake, as has already been remarked,* than the fancying a close resemblance between his eloquence and that of Demosthenes; although an excellent judge (Sir James Mackintosh) fell into it, when he pronounced him "the most Demosthenean speaker since Demosthenes." That he resembled his immortal predecessor in despising all useless ornament, and all declamation for declamation's sake, is true enough; but it applies to every good speaker as well as to those two signal ornaments of ancient and modern rhetoric. That he resembled him in keeping more close to the subject in hand, than many good and even great speakers have often done, may also be affirmed; yet this is far too vague and too remote a likeness to justify the proposition in question; and it is only a difference in degree, and not a specific distinction between him and others. That his eloquence was fervid, rapid, copious, carrying along with it the minds of the audience, nor suffering them to dwell upon the speaker or the speech, but engrossing their whole attention, and keeping it fixed on the question, is equally certain; and is the only real resemblance which the comparison affords. But then the points of difference are as numerous as they are important, and they strike indeed upon the most cursory glance. The one was full of repetitions, recurring again and again to the same topic, nay, to the same view of it, till he had made his impression complete; the other never came back upon a ground which he had utterly wasted and withered up by the tide of fire he had rolled over it. The one dwelt at length, and with many words on his topics; the other performed the whole at a

* Lord Chatham.

blow, sometimes with a word, always with the smallest number of words possible. The one frequently was digressive, even narrative and copious in illustration; in the other no deviation from his course was ever to be perceived; no disporting on the borders of his way, more than any lingering upon it: but carried rapidly forward, and without swerving to the right or to the left, like the engines flying along a railway, and like them driving everything out of sight that obstructed his resistless course. In diction as well as in thought the contrast was alike remarkable. It is singular that any one should have thought of likening Mr. Fox to the orator of whom the great Roman critic, comparing him with Cicero, has said so well and so judiciously—*In illo plus curæ, in hoc plus naturæ.* The Greek was, of all speakers, the one who most carefully prepared each sentence; showing himself as sedulous in the collocation of his words as in the selection. His composition, accordingly, is a model of the most artificial workmanship; yet of an art so happy in its results that itself is wholly concealed. The Englishman was negligent, careless, slovenly beyond most speakers; even his most brilliant passages were the inspirations of the moment; and he frequently spoke for half an hour at a time, sometimes delivered whole speeches, without being fluent for five minutes, or, excepting in a few sound and sensible remarks which were interspersed, rewarding the hearer with a single redeeming passage. Indeed, to the last, he never possessed, unless when much animated, any great fluency; and probably despised it, as he well might, if he only regarded its effects in making men neglect more essential qualities,—when the curse of being *fluent speakers*, and nothing else, has fallen on them and on their audience. Nevertheless, that fluency—the being able easily to express his thoughts in correct words—is as essential to a speaker as drawing to a painter. This we cannot doubt, any more than we can refuse our assent to the proposition, that though merely giving pleasure is no part of an orator's duty, yet he has no vocation to give his audience pain; which any one must feel who listens to a speaker delivering himself with difficulty and hesitation.

The practice of composition seems never to have been familiar to Mr. Fox. His speeches show this; perhaps his writings still more; because there, the animation of the momentary excitement which often carried him on in speaking, had little or no play. One of his worst speeches, if not his worst, is that upon Francis Duke of Bedford; and it is known to be almost the only one he had ever much prepared, and the only one he ever corrected for the press. His "History," too, shows the same want of expertness in composition. The style is pure and correct; but cold and lifeless; it is even somewhat abrupt and discontinuous; so little does it flow naturally or with ease. Yet, when writing letters without any effort, no one expressed himself more hap-

pily or with more graceful facility; and in conversation, of which he only partook when the society was small and intimate, he was a model of every excellence, whether solid or gay, plain or refined—full of information, witty and playful betimes, never ill-natured for a moment; —above all, never afraid of an argument, as so many eminent men are wont to be; but, on the contrary, courting discussion on all subjects, perhaps without much regard to their relative importance; as if reasoning were his natural element, in which his great faculties moved the most freely. An admirable judge, but himself addicted to reasoning upon general principles, the late Mr. Dumont, used to express his surprise at the love of minute discussion, of argumentation upon trifling subjects, which this great man often showed. But the cause was clear; argument he must have; and as his studies, except upon historical and classical points, had been extremely confined, when matters of a political or critical cast were not on the carpet, he took whatever ordinary matter came uppermost, and made it the subject of discussion. To this circumstance may be added his playful good-nature; which partook, as Mr. Gibbon observed, of the simplicity of a child; making him little fastidious and easily interested and amused.

Having premised all these qualifications, it must now be added, that Mr. Fox's eloquence was of a kind which, to comprehend, you must have heard himself. When he got fairly into his subject, was heartily warmed with it, he poured forth words and periods of fire that smote you, and deprived you of all power to reflect and rescue yourself, while he went on to seize the faculties of the listener, and carry them captive along with him whithersoever he might please to rush. It is ridiculous to doubt that he was a far closer reasoner, a much more argumentative speaker, than Demosthenes; as much more so as Demothenes would perhaps have been than Fox had he lived in our times, and had to address an English House of Commons. For it is the kindred mistake of those who fancy that the two were like each other, to imagine that the Grecian's orations are long chains of ratiocination, like Sir William Grant's arguments, or Euclid's demonstrations. They are close to the point; they are full of impressive allusions; they abound in expositions of the adversary's inconsistency; they are loaded with bitter invective; they never lose sight of the subject; and they never quit hold of the hearer, by the striking appeals they make to his strongest feelings and his favourite recollections: to the heart, or to the quick and immediate sense of inconsistency, they are always addressed, and find their way thither by the shortest and surest road; but to the head, to the calm and sober judgment, as pieces of argumentation, they assuredly are not addressed. But Mr. Fox, as he went along, and exposed absurdity, and made inconsistent arguments clash, and laid bare shuffling or hypocrisy,

and showered down upon meanness, or upon cruelty, or upon oppression, a pitiless storm of the most fierce invective, was ever forging also the long, and compacted, and massive chain of pure demonstration.

Ἐν δ' ἔθεν' ἄχμοθετο μεγαν ἄχμοτα, κόπτε δε δεσμους
Ἀῤῥηκτους, ἀλυτους, ὄῤῤι εμπεδον αὖθι μενοιεν.
(*Od.*)

There was no weapon of argument which this great orator more happily or more frequently wielded than wit,—the wit which exposes to ridicule the absurdity or inconsistency of an adverse argument. It has been said of him, we believe by Mr. Frere,* that he was the wittiest speaker of his times; and they were the times of Sheridan and of Windham. This was Mr. Canning's opinion, and it was also Mr. Pitt's. There was nothing more awful in Mr. Pitt's sarcasm, nothing so vexatious in Mr. Canning's light and galling raillery, as the battering and piercing wit with which Mr. Fox so often interrupted, but always supported, the heavy artillery of his argumentative declamation.

"Nonne fuit satius, tristes Amaryllidis iras,
Atque superba pati fastidia? Nonne, Menalcan?"

In debate he had that ready discernment of an adversary's weakness, and the advantage to be taken of it, which is, in the war of words, what the *coup-d'œil* of a practised general is in the field. He was ever best in reply: his opening speeches were almost always unsuccessful: the one in 1805, upon the Catholic Question, was a great exception; and the previous meditation upon it, after having heard Lord Grenville's able opening of the same question in the House of Lords, gave him much anxiety: he felt exceedingly *nervous*, to use the common expression. It was a noble performance, instinct with sound principle; full of broad and striking views of policy; abounding in magnanimous appeals to justice, and bold assertions of right; in one passage touching and pathetic,—the description of a Catholic soldier's feelings on reviewing some field where he had shared the dangers of the fight, yet repined to think that he could never taste the glories of command. His greatest speeches were those in 1791, on the Russian armament, on Parliamentary Reform in 1797, and on the renewal of the war in 1803. The last he himself preferred to all the others; and it had the disadvantage, if it be not, however, in another sense, the advantage,† of coming after the finest speech, excepting that on the slave trade, ever delivered by his great antagonist. But there are passages in the earlier speeches,—particularly the fierce attack upon Lord Auckland in the Russian

* See Quarterly Review for October, 1810.

† To a great speaker, it is always an advantage to follow a powerful adversary. The audience is prepared for attention, nay, even feels a craving for some answer.

speech,—and the impressive and vehement summary of our failings and our misgovernment in the Reform speech, which it would be hard to match even in the speech of 1803. But for the inferiority of the subject, the speech upon the Westminster Scrutiny in 1784 might perhaps be justly placed at the head of them all. The surpassing interest of the question to the speaker himself; the thorough knowledge of all its details possessed by his audience, which made it sufficient to allude to matters and not to state them;* the undeniably strong grounds of attack which he had against his adversary; all conspire to make this great oration as animated and energetic throughout, as it is perfectly felicitous both in the choice of topics and the handling of them. A fortunate cry of "*Order*," which he early raised in the very exordium, by affirming that "far from expecting any indulgence, he could scarcely hope for bare justice from the House," gave him occasion for dwelling on this topic, and pressing it home with additional illustration; till the redoubled blows and repeated bursts of extemporaneous declamation almost overpowered the audience, while they wholly bore down all further interruption. A similar effect is said to have been produced by Mr. (now Lord) Plunket, in the Irish House of Commons, upon some one calling out to take down his words. "Stop," said this consummate orator, "and you shall have something more to take down;" and then followed in a torrent, the most vehement and indignant description of the wrongs which his country had sustained, and had still to endure.

In most of the external qualities of oratory, Mr. Fox was certainly deficient, being of an unwieldy person, without any grace of action, with a voice of little compass, and which, when pressed in the vehemence of his speech, became shrill almost to a cry or squeak; yet all this was absolutely forgotten in the moment when the torrent began to pour. Some of the under tones of his voice were peculiarly sweet; and there was even in the shrill and piercing sounds which he uttered when at the more exalted pitch, a power that thrilled the heart of the hearer. His pronunciation of our language was singularly beautiful, and his use of it pure and chaste to severity. As he rejected, from the correctness of his taste, all vicious ornaments, and was most sparing, indeed, in the use of figures at all; so, in his choice of words, he justly shunned foreign idiom, or words borrowed, whether from the ancient or modern languages; and affected the pure Saxon tongue, the resources of which are unknown to so many who use it, both in writing and in speaking.

If from the orator we turn to the man, we shall find much more to blame and to lament, whether his private character be regarded or

* This is one main cause of the conciseness and rapidity of the Greek orations; they were all on a few simple topics thoroughly known to the whole audience. Much of their difficulty comes also from this source.

his public; but for the defects of the former, there are excuses to be offered, almost sufficient to remove the censure, and leave the feeling of regret entire and alone. The foolish indulgence of a father, from whom he inherited his talents certainly, but little principle, put him, while yet a boy, in the possession of pecuniary resources which cannot safely be trusted to more advanced stages of youth; and the dissipated habits of the times drew him, before the age of manhood, into the whirlpool of fashionable excess. In the comparatively correct age in which our lot is cast, it would be almost as unjust to apply our more severe standard to him and his associates, as it would have been for the Ludlows and Hutchinsons of the seventeenth century, in writing a history of the Roman empire, to denounce the immoralities of Julius Cæsar. Nor let it be forgotten that the noble heart and sweet disposition of this great man passed unscathed through an ordeal which, in almost every other instance, is found to deaden all the kindly and generous affections. A life of gambling, and intrigue, and faction, left the nature of Charles Fox as little tainted with selfishness or falsehood, and his heart as little hardened, as if he had lived and died in a farm-house; or rather as if he had not outlived his childish years.

The historian of a character so attractive, the softer features of which present a rare contrast to the accustomed harshness of political men, is tempted to extend the same indulgence, and ascribe the errors of the statesman to the accidents of his position, or the less lofty tone of principle which distinguished the earlier period of his public life, while his principles of conduct were forming and ripening. The great party, too, which he so long led with matchless personal influence, would gladly catch at such a means of defence; but as the very same measure of justice or of mercy must be meted out to the public conduct of Mr. Pitt, his great rival, there would be little gain to party pride by that sacrifice of principle, which could alone lead to such unworthy concessions. It is of most dangerous example, of most corrupting tendency, ever to let the faults of statesmen pass uncensured; or to treat the errors or the crimes which involve the interests of millions with the same indulgence towards human frailty which we may, in the exercise of charity, show towards the more venial transgressions that only hurt an individual; most commonly only the wrong-doer himself. Of Mr. Fox it must be said, that whilst his political principles were formed upon the true model of the Whig School, and led him, when combined with his position as opposing the government's warlike and oppressive policy, to defend the liberty of America, and support the cause of peace both in that and the French war, yet he constantly modified these principles, according to his own situation and circumstances as a party chief; making the ambition of the man and the interest of his followers the govern-

ing rule of his conduct. The charge is a grave one; but unhappily the facts fully bear it out. Because Lord Shelburne had gained the King's ear, by an intrigue possibly, but then Lord Shelburne never had pretended to be a follower of Mr. Fox, the latter formed a coalition with Lord North, whose person and whose policy he had spent his whole life in decrying; whose misgovernment of America had been the cause of nearly destroying the empire; and whose whole principles were the very reverse of his own. The ground taken by this coalition on which to subvert the government of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, was, their having made a peace favourable to England beyond what could have been expected, after the state to which Lord North's maladministration had reduced her; their having, among other things, given the new American States too large concessions; and their having made inadequate provision for the security and indemnity of the American loyalists. On such grounds they, Mr. Fox and Lord North, succeeded in overturning the ministry, and took their places; which they held for a few months, when the King dismissed them, amidst the all but universal joy of the country; men of all ranks, and parties, and sects, joining in one feeling of disgust at the factious propensities in which the unnatural alliance was begotten; and apprehending from it, as Mr. Wilberforce remarked, "a progeny stamped with the features of both parents, the violence of the one party, and the corruption of the other." This grand error raised the Tories and Mr. Pitt to the power which, during their long and undisturbed reign, they enjoyed, notwithstanding all the unparalleled difficulties of the times, and in spite of so many failures in all the military enterprises of themselves and of their foreign allies. The original quarrel with Mr. Pitt was an error proceeding from the same evil source. His early but mature talents had been amply displayed; he had already gained an influence in Parliament and the country, partly from hereditary, partly from personal qualities, second only to that of Mr. Fox; his private character was wholly untarnished; his principles were the same with those of the Whigs; he had nobly fought with them the battle which destroyed the North administration. Yet no first-rate place could be found to offer him; although Mr. Fox had once and again declared a boundless admiration of his genius, and an unlimited confidence in his character. Lord John Cavendish, of an illustrious Whig house by birth, but himself one of the most obscure of mankind, must needs be made Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Pitt was only the son of Lord Chatham, and a man of vast talents, as well as spotless reputation, and he was thus not permitted, without a sacrifice of personal honour, to be the ally of Mr. Fox, in serving their common country. How much misery and mischief might the world have been spared had the Rockingham Ministry preferred Mr. Pitt to Lord

John Cavendish, and made the union between him and the Whigs perpetual! We shall presently see that an error almost as great in itself, though in its consequences far from being so disastrous, was afterwards committed by Mr. Pitt himself.

The interval between the American and the French wars was passed by Mr. Fox in opposing whatever was proposed by his antagonist; with the single exception of the measures for restoring the Stadtholder's authority in 1787. His hearty admiration of the French Revolution is well known; and it was wholly unqualified by any of the profound and sagacious forebodings of Mr. Burke, excited by the distrust of vast and sudden changes among a people wholly unprepared; and which seems never afterwards to have been diminished by the undoubted fact of a minority having obtained the sway, and being compelled to make up, with the resources of terror, for the essential want of support among the people at large. The separation of his aristocratic supporters, and the unfortunate war to which it led, left him to struggle for peace and the Constitution, with a small but steady band of noble-minded associates; and their warfare for the rights of the people during the dismal period of alarm which elapsed from 1793 to 1801, when the healing influence of the Addington Government was applied to our national wounds, cannot be too highly extolled. The Whigs thus regained the confidence of the nation, which their Coalition ten years before seemed to have forfeited for ever. The new junction with the Grenville party in 1804 was liable to none of the same objections; it was founded on common principles; and it both honoured its authors and served the State. But when, upon Mr. Pitt's death, Mr. Fox again became possessed of power, we find him widely different from the leader of a hopeless though high-principled Opposition to the Court of George III. He consented to take office without making any stipulation with the King on behalf of the Catholics; a grave neglect, which afterwards subverted the Whig Government; and if it be said that this sacrifice was made to obtain the greater object of peace with France, then it must be added that he was slack indeed in his pursuit of that great object. He allowed the odious income-tax to be nearly doubled, after being driven, one by one, from the taxes proposed; and proposed on the very worst principles ever dreamt of by financiers. He defended the unprincipled arrangement for making the Lord Chief Justice of England a politician, by placing him in the Cabinet. He joined as heartily as any one in the fervour of loyal enthusiasm for the Hanoverian possessions of the Crown. On one great subject his sense of right, no less than his warm and humane feelings, kept him invariably true to the great principles of justice as well as policy. His attachment was unceasing, and his services invaluable to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which his last accession to office certainly

accelerated by several years. For this, and for his support of Lord Erskine in his amendment of the Law of Libel, the lasting gratitude of his country and of mankind is due; and to the memory of so great and so amiable a man it is a tribute which will for ever be cheerfully paid. But to appreciate the gratitude which his country owes him, we must look, not to his ministerial life; we must recur to his truly glorious career as leader of the patriot band which, during the almost hopeless struggle from 1793 to 1801, upheld the cause of afflicted freedom. If to the genius and the courage of Erskine we may justly be said to owe the escape from proscription and from arbitrary power, Fox stands next to him as the preserver of that sacred fire of liberty which they saved to blaze forth in happier times. Nor could even Erskine have triumphed as he did, had not the party which Fox so nobly led persevered in maintaining the sacred warfare, and in rallying around them whatever was left of the old English spirit to resist oppression.

MR. PITT.

THE circumstances of his celebrated antagonist's situation were as different from his own as could well be imagined. It was not merely disparity of years by which they were distinguished; all the hereditary prejudices under which the one appeared before the country were as unfavourable, as the prepossessions derived from his father's character and renown were auspicious to the entrance of the other upon the theatre of public affairs. The grief, indeed, was yet recent which the people had felt for the loss of Lord Chatham's genius, so proudly towering above all party views and personal ties, so entirely devoted to the cause of his principles and his patriotism—when his son appeared to take his station, and contest the first rank in the popular affection with the son of him whose policy and parts had been sunk into obscurity by the superior lustre of his adversary's capacity and virtues. But the young statesman's own talents and conduct made good the claim which his birth announced. At an age when others are but entering upon the study of state affairs and the practice of debating, he came forth a mature politician, a finished orator,—even, as if by inspiration, an accomplished debater. His knowledge, too, was not confined to the study of the classics, though with these he was familiarly conversant; the more severe pursuits of Cambridge had imparted to him some acquaintance with the stricter sciences which have had their home upon the banks of the Granta since Newton made them his abode; and with political philosophy he was more familiar than most Englishmen of his own

age. Having prepared himself, too, for being called to the bar, and both attended on courts of justice and frequented the western circuit, he had more knowledge and habits of business than can fall to the share of our young patricians;—the material out of which British statesmen are for the most part fashioned by an attendance upon debates in Parliament, and a study of newspapers in the clubs. Happy had he not too soon removed into office from the prosecution of studies which his rapid success broke off never to be resumed! For the leading defect of his life, which is seen through all his measures, and which not even his great capacity and intense industry could supply, was an ignorance of the principles upon which large measures are to be framed, and nations to be at once guided and improved. As soon as he entered upon official duties, his time was at the mercy of every one who had a claim to prefer, a grievance to complain of, or a nostrum to propound; nor could the hours of which the day consists suffice at once to give all these their audience; to transact the routine business of his station; to direct or to counteract the intrigues of party; and, at the same time, to learn all that his sudden transplanting from the study to the Cabinet, and from the Bar to the Senate, had of necessity left unlearnt.

From hence, and from the temptation always afforded in times of difficulty to avoid as much as possible all unnecessary embarrassments and all risks not forced upon him, arose the peculiarity which marks his story, and marks it in a way not less hurtful to his own renown, through after ages, than unfortunate for his country. With more power than any minister ever possessed—with an Opposition which rather was a help than a hindrance to him during the greater part of his rule—with a friendly Court, an obsequious Parliament, a confiding people—he held the supreme place in the public councils for twenty years, and, excepting the Union with Ireland, which was forced upon him by a rebellion, and which was both corruptly and imperfectly carried, so as to produce the smallest possible benefit to either country, he has not left a single measure behind him for which the community, whose destinies he so long swayed, has any reason to respect his memory; while, by want of firmness, he was the cause of an impolicy and extravagance, the effects of which are yet felt, and will oppress us beyond the life of the youngest now alive.

It is assuredly not to Mr. Pitt's sinking-fund that we allude, as showing his defective political resources; that scheme, now exploded, after being gradually given up by all adepts in the science of finance, was for many years their favourite; nor can he in this particular be so justly charged, as he well may in all the rest of his measures, with never having gone before his age, and not always being upon a level with the wisdom of his own times. Yet may it be confessed that, his financial administration being the main feature in his official

history, all his other plans are allowed to have been failures at the time; and this, the only exception, began to be questioned before his decease, and has long been abandoned.* Neither should we visit harshly the entire change of his opinions upon the great question of Reform; albeit the question with which his claims to public favour commenced, and on his support of which his early popularity and power were almost wholly grounded. But the force, it must be admitted, of the defence urged for his conversion, that the alarms raised in the most reflecting minds by the French Revolution, and its cognate excitement among ourselves, justified a reconsideration of the opinions originally entertained upon our Parliamentary system, and might induce an honest alteration of them. That any such considerations could ever justify him in lending himself to the persecution of his former associates in that cause, may be peremptorily denied; and in aid of this denial, it may be asked, what would have been said of Mr. Wilberforce, and the other abolitionists, had they, on account of some dreadful desolation of our colonies by negro insurrection, suddenly joined in proscribing and persecuting all who, after they themselves had left the cause, should continue to devote their efforts to its promotion? But the main charge against Mr. Pitt is his having suffered himself to be led away by the alarms of the Court, and the zeal of his new allies, the Burke and Windham party, from the ardent love of peace which he professed and undoubtedly felt, to the eager support of the war against France, which might well have been avoided had he but stood firm. The deplorable consequences of this change in his conduct are too well known: they are still too sensibly felt. But are the motives of it wholly free from suspicion? *Cui bono?* was the question put by the Roman lawyer when the person really guilty of any act was sought for. A similar question may often be put, without any want of charity, when we are in quest of the motives which prompted a doubtful or suspicious course of action, proved by experience to have been disastrous to the world. That, as the chief of a party, Mr. Pitt was incalculably a gainer by the event which, for a while, well-nigh annihilated the Opposition to his Ministry, and left that Opposition crippled as long as the war lasted, no man can doubt. That, independent of its breaking up the Whig party, the war gave their antagonist a constant lever wherewithal to move at will both parliament and people, as long as the sinews of war could be obtained from the resources of the country, is at least as unquestionable a fact.

His conduct of the war betrayed no extent of views, no commanding notions of policy. Anything more commonplace can hardly be

* It was Dr. Price's Plan; and he complained that of the three Schemes proposed by him, Mr. Pitt had selected the worst.

imagined. To form one coalition after another in Germany, and subsidise them with millions of free gift, or aid with profuse loans, until all the powers in our pay were defeated in succession, and most of them either destroyed or converted into allies of the enemy —such were all the resources of his diplomatic policy. To shun any effectual conflict with the enemy, while he wasted our military force in petty expeditions; to occupy forts, and capture colonies, which, if France prevailed in Europe, were useless acquisitions, only increasing the amount of the slave trade, and carrying abroad our own capital, and which, if France were beaten in Europe, would all of themselves fall into our hands—such was the whole scheme of his warlike policy. The operations of our navy, which were undertaken as a matter of course, and would have been performed, and must have led to our brilliant maritime successes, whoever was the minister, nay, whether or not there was any minister at all, may be added to the account; but can have little or no influence upon the estimate to be formed of his belligerent administration. When, after a most culpable refusal to treat with Napoleon in 1800, grounded on the puerile hope of the newly-gotten Consular power being soon overthrown, he found it impossible any longer to continue the ruinous expenditure of the war, he retired, placing in his office his puppet, with whom he quarrelled for refusing to retire when he was bidden. But the ostensible ground of his resignation was the King's bigoted refusal to emancipate the Irish catholics. Nothing could have more redounded to his glory than this. But he resumed office in 1804, refused to make any stipulation for those same catholics, and always opposed those who urged their claims, on the utterly unconstitutional ground of the king's personal prejudices; a ground quite as solid for yielding to that monarch in 1801, as for not urging him in 1804. It was quite as descreditable to him that, on the same occasion, after pressing Mr. Fox upon Goorge III. as an accession of strength necessary for well carrying on the war, he agreed to take office without any such accession, rather than thwart the personal antipathy, the capricious, the despicable antipathy of that narrow-minded and vindictive prince against the most illustrious of his subjects. *

* It is a singular instance of the great effects of trivial circumstances that the following anecdote has been preserved:—During the co-operation of all parties against Mr. Addington's Government in the spring of 1804, Mr. Pitt and Mr. C. Long were one night passing the door of Brooks's Club-house, on their way from the House of Commons, when Mr. Pitt, who had not been there since the Coalition of 1784, said he had a great mind to go in and sup. His wary friend said, "I think you had better not," and turned aside the well-conceived intention. When we reflect on the high favour Mr. Pitt then was in with the Whigs, and consider the nature of Mr. Fox as well as his own, we can have little doubt of the cordial friend-

These are heavy charges; but we fear the worst remains to be urged against the conduct of this eminent person. No man felt more strongly on the subject of the African Slave Trade than he; and all who heard him are agreed that his speeches against it were the finest of his noble orations. Yet did he continue for eighteen years of his life, suffering every one of his colleagues, nay, of his mere underlings in office, to vote against the question of Abolition, if they thought fit; men, the least inconsiderable of whom durst no more have thwarted him upon any of the more trifling measures of his government, than they durst have thrust their heads into the fire. Even the foreign slave trade, and the traffic which his war policy had trebled by the captured enemy's colonies, he suffered to grow and prosper under the fostering influence of British capital; and after letting years and years glide away, and hundreds of thousands be torn from their own country, and carried to perpetual misery in ours, while one stroke of his pen could, at any moment, have stopped it for ever, he only could be brought to issue, a few months before his death, the Order in Council which at length destroyed the pestilence. This is by far the gravest charge to which Mr. Pitt's memory is exposed.

If from the statesman we turn to the orator, the contrast is indeed marvellous. He is to be placed, without any doubt, in the highest class. With a sparing use of ornament, hardly indulging more in figures, or even in figurative expression, than the most severe examples of ancient chasteness allowed—with little variety of style, hardly any of the graces of manner—he no sooner rose than he carried away every hearer, and kept the attention fixed and unflagging till it pleased him to let it go; and then

> " So charming left his voice, that we, awhile,
> Still thought him speaking, still stood fix'd to hear."

This magical effect was produced by his unbroken flow, which never for a moment left the hearer in pain or doubt, and yet was not the mean fluency of mere relaxation, requiring no effort of the speaker, but imposing on the listener a heavy task; by his lucid arrangement, which made all parts of the most complicated subject quit their entanglement, and fall each into its place; by the clearness of his statements, which presented at once a picture to the mind; by the forcible appeals to strict reason and strong feeling, which formed the great staple of the discourse; by the majesty of the diction; by the depth and fulness of the most sonorous voice, and the unbending dignity of the manner, which ever reminded us that we were in the

ship which such a night would have cemented, and that the union of the two parties would have been complete.

presence of more than an advocate or debater, that there stood before us a ruler of the people. Such were the effects invariably of this singular eloquence; and they were as certainly produced on ordinary occasions, as in those grander displays when he rose to the height of some great argument; or indulged in vehement invective against some individual, and variegated his speech with that sarcasm of which he was so great, and indeed so little sparing a master; although even here all was uniform and consistent; nor did anything, in any mood of mind, ever drop from him that was unsuited to the majestic frame of the whole, or could disturb the serenity of the full and copious flood that rolled along.

But if such was the unfailing impression at first produced, and which, for a season absorbing the faculties, precluded all criticism; upon reflection, faults and imperfections certainly were disclosed. There prevailed a monotony in the matter, as well as in the manner; and even the delightful voice which so long prevented this from being felt, was itself almost without any variety of tone. All things were said nearly in the same way; as if by some curious machine, periods were rounded and flung off; as if, in like moulds, though of different sizes, ideas were shaped and brought out. His composition was correct enough, but not peculiarly felicitous; his English was sufficiently pure without being at all racy, or various, or brilliant; his style was, by Mr. Windham, called "a state-paper style," in allusion to its combined dignity and poverty; and the same nice observer, referring to the eminently skilful way in which he balanced his phrases, sailed near the wind, and seemed to disclose much whilst he kept the greater part of his meaning to himself, declared that he "verily believed Mr. Pitt could speak a King's speech off-hand." His declamation was admirable, mingling with and clothing the argument, as to be good for any thing it always must; and no more separable from the reasoning than the heat is from the metal in a stream of lava. Yet, with all this excellence, the last effect of the highest eloquence was for the most part wanting; we seldom forgot the speaker, or lost the artist in the work. He was earnest enough; he seemed quite sincere; he was moved himself as he would move us; we even went along with him, and forgot *ourselves*; but we hardly forgot *him*; and while thrilled with the glow which his burning words diffused, or transfixed with wonder at so marvellous a display of skill, we yet felt that it was admiration of a consummate artist which filled us, and that after all we were present at an exhibition; gazing upon a wonderful performer indeed, but still a performer.

We have ventured to name the greatest displays of Mr. Fox's oratory; and it is fit we should attempt as much by his illustrious rival's. The speech on the war, in 1803, which, by an accident that befell the gallery, was never reported, is generally supposed to have

excelled all his other performances in vehement and spirit-stirring declamation; and this may be the more easily believed when we know that Mr. Fox, in his reply, said, "The orators of antiquity would have admired, probably would have envied it." The last half hour is described as having been one unbroken torrent of the most majestic declamation. Of those which are in any degree preserved (though it must be remarked that the characteristics now given of his eloquence show how much of it was sure to escape even the fullest transcript that could be given of the words), the finest in all probability is that upon the peace of 1783, and the Coalition, when he closed his magnificent peroration by that noble yet simple figure, "And if this inauspicious union be not already consummated, in the name of my country I forbid the banns." But all authorities agree in placing his speech on the Slave Trade, in 1791, before any other effort of his genius; because it combined, with the most impassioned declamation, the deepest pathos, the most lively imagination, and the closest reasoning. We have it from a friend of his own, who sat beside him on this memorable occasion, that its effects on Mr. Fox were manifest during the whole period of the delivery, while Mr. Sheridan expressed his feelings in the most hearty and even passionate terms; and we have it from Mr. Windham that he walked home lost in amazement at the compass, till then unknown to him, of human eloquence. It is from the former source of information that we derive the singular fact of the orator's health at the time being such, as to require his retirement immediately before he rose, in order to take a medicine required for allaying the violent irritation of his stomach.

Let it, however, be added, that he was from the first a finished debater, although certainly practice and the habit of command had given him more perfect quickness in perceiving an advantage and availing himself of an opening, as it were, in the adverse battle, with the skill and the rapidity wherewith our Wellington, in an instant perceiving the columns of Marmont somewhat too widely separated, executed the movement that gave him the victory of Salamanca. So did Mr. Pitt overthrow his great antagonist on the Regency, and in some other conflicts. It may be further observed, that never was any kind of eloquence, or any cast of talents more perfectly suited to the position of leading the Government forces, keeping up the spirits of his followers under disaster, encouraging them to stand a galling adverse fire, above all, presenting them and the friendly though neutral portion of the audience, with reasons or with plausible pretexts for giving the Government that support which the one class desired to give, and the other had no disposition to withhold. The effects which his calm and dignified, yet earnest, manner produced on these classes, and the impression which it left on their minds, have been admirably portrayed by one of the most

able among them, and with his well-chosen words this imperfect sketch of so great a subject may be closed:—"Every part of his speaking, in sentiment, in language, and in delivery, evidently bore the stamp of his character. All communicated a definite and varied apprehension of the qualities of strenuousness without bustle, unlaboured intrepidity, and severe greatness."*

Nothing that we have yet said of this extraordinary person has touched upon his private character, unless so far as the graver faults of the politician must ever border upon the vices or the frailties of the man. But it must be admitted, what even his enemies were willing to confess, that in his failings, or in his delinquencies, there was nothing mean, paltry, or low. His failings were ascribed to love of power and of glory; and pride was the harshest feature that disfigured him to the public eye. We doubt if this can all be said with perfect justice; still more that if it could, any satisfactory defence would thus be made. The ambition cannot be pronounced very lofty which showed that place, mere high station, was so dear to it as to be sought without regard to its just concomitant, power, and clung by, after being stript of this, the only attribute that can recommend it to noble minds. Yet he well described his office as "the pride of his heart and the pleasure of his life," when boasting that he had sacrificed it to his engagements with Ireland at the Union; and then, within a very short period, he proved that the pleasure and the pride were far too dearly loved to let him think of that tie when he again grasped them, wholly crippled, and deprived of all power to carry a single measure of importance. Nor can any thirst for power itself, any ambition, be it of the most exalted kind, ever justify the measures which he contrived for putting to death those former coadjutors of his own, whose leading object was reform; even if they had overstepped the bounds of law, in the pursuit of their common purpose. His conduct on the slave trade falls within the same view; and leaves a dark shade resting upon his reputation as a man, a shade which, God be praised, few would take, to be the first of orators and greatest of ministers.

In private life he was singularly amiable; his spirits were naturally buoyant and even playful; his affections warm; his veracity scrupulously exact; his integrity wholly without a stain; and, although he was, from his situation, cut off from most of the relations of domestic life, as a son and a brother he was perfect, and no man was more fondly beloved or more sincerely mourned by his friends.†

* *Quarterly Review, August*, 1819.—Supposed to be by Mr. J. H. Frere, but avowedly by an intimate personal friend.

† The story told of his refusing to marry Mademoiselle Necker (afterwards Madame de Staël), when the match was proposed by the father, rests upon a true foundation; but the form of the answer, "that he was already married to his coun-

It was a circumstance broadly distinguishing the parliamentary position of the two great leaders whom we have been surveying, that while the one had to fight the whole battle of his government for many years, the first and most arduous of his life, if not single handed, yet with but one coadjutor of any power, the other was surrounded by "troops of friends," any one of whom might well have borne the foremost part. Against such men as Burke, Windham, Sheridan, North, Erskine, Lee, Barré,—Mr. Pitt could only set Mr. Dundas; and it is certainly the most astonishing part of his history, that against such a phalanx, backed by the majority of the Commons, he could struggle all through the first session of his administration. Indeed, had it not been for the support which he received both from the Court and the Lords, and from the People, who were justly offended with the unnatural coalition of his adversaries, this session would not only have been marvellous but impossible.

MR. SHERIDAN.

Of Mr. Fox's adherents who have just been named, the most remarkable certainly was Mr. Sheridan, and with all his faults, and all his failings, and all his defects, the first in genius and greatest in power. When the illustrious name of Erskine appears in the bright catalogue, it is unnecessary to add that we here speak of parliamentary genius and political power.

These sketches as naturally begin with a notice of the means by which the great rhetorical combatants were brought up, and trained and armed for the conflict, as Homer's battles do with the buckling on of armour and other note of preparation, when he brings his warriors forward upon the scene. Of Mr. Sheridan, any more than of Mr. Burke, it cannot be lamented, as of almost all other English statesmen, that he came prematurely into public life, without time given for preparation by study. Yet this time in his case had been far otherwise spent than in Mr. Burke's. Though his education had not been neglected, for he was bred at Harrow, and with Dr. Parr, yet he was an idle and a listless boy, learning as little as possible, and suffering as much wretchedness; an avowal which to the

try," has, unless it was a jest, which is very possible, no more foundation than the dramatic exit described by Mr. Rose in the House of Commons, when he stated "Oh my country," to have been his last words—though it is certain that, for many hours, he only uttered incoherent sentences. Such things were too theatrical for so great a man, and of too vulgar a caste for so consummate a performer, had he stooped to play a part in such circumstances.

end of his life he never ceased to make, and to make in a very affecting manner. Accordingly, he brought away from school a very slender provision of classical learning; and his taste, never correct or chaste, was wholly formed by acquaintance with the English poets and dramatists, and perhaps a few of our more ordinary prose-writers; for in no other language could he read with anything approaching to ease. Of those poets, he most *professed* to admire and to have studied Dryden; he plainly *had* most studied Pope, whom he always vilified and always imitated. But of dramatists his passion evidently was Congreve, and after him Vanburgh, Farquhar, even Wycherly; all of whom served for the model, partly even for the magazine of his own dramatic writings, as Pope did of his verses. "The Duenna," however, is formed after the fashion of Gay; of whom it falls further short than the "School for Scandal" does of Congreve. That his plays were great productions for any age, astonishing for a youth of twenty-three and twenty-five, is unquestionable. Johnson has accounted for the phenomenon of Congreve, at a still earlier period of life, showing much knowledge of the world, by observing that, on a close examination, his dialogues and characters might have been gathered from books "without much actual commerce with mankind." The same can hardly be said of the "School for Scandal;" but the author wrote it when he was five years older than Congreve had been at the date of the "Old Bachelor."

Thus with an ample share of literary and dramatic reputation, but not certainly of the kind most auspicious for a statesman; with a most slender provision of knowledge at all likely to be useful in political affairs; with a position by birth and profession little suited to command the respect of the most aristocratic country in Europe—the son of an actor, the manager himself of a theatre—he came into that parliament which was enlightened by the vast and various knowledge, as well as fortified and adorned by the more choice literary fame of a Burke, and which owned the sway of consummate orators like Fox and Pitt. His first effort was unambitious, and it was unsuccessful. Aiming at but a low flight, he failed in that humbled attempt. An experienced judge, Woodfall, told him "It would never do;" and counselled him to seek again the more congenial atmosphere of Drury-lane. But he was resolved that it should do: he had taken his part; and, as he felt the matter was in him, he vowed not to desist till "he had brought it out." What he wanted in acquired learning, and in natural quickness, he made up by indefatigable industry: within given limits, towards a present object, no labour could daunt him; no man could work for a season with more steady and unwearied application. By constant practice in small matters, or before private committees, by diligent attendance upon all debates, by habitual intercourse with all dealers in political wares,

from the chiefs of parties and their more refined coteries to the providers of daily discussion for the public and the chroniclers of parliamentary speeches, he trained himself to a facility of speaking, absolutely essential to all but first-rate genius, and all but necessary even to that; and he acquired what acquaintance with the science of politics he ever possessed, or his speeches ever betrayed. By these steps he rose to the rank of a first-rate speaker, and as great a debater as a want of readiness and need for preparation would permit.

He had some qualities which led him to this rank, and which only required the habit of speech to bring them out into successful exhibition; a warm imagination, though more prone to repeat with variations the combinations of others, or to combine anew their creations, than to bring forth original productions; a fierce, dauntless spirit of attack; a familiarity, acquired from his dramatic studies, with the feelings of the heart and the ways to touch its chords; a facility of epigram and point, the yet more direct gift of the same theatrical apprenticeship; an excellent manner, not unconnected with that experience; and a depth of voice which perfectly suited the tone of his declamation, be it invective, or be it descriptive, or be it impassioned. His wit, derived from the same source, or sharpened by the same previous habits, was eminently brilliant, and almost always successful; it was like all his speaking, exceedingly prepared, but it was skilfully introduced and happily applied; and it was well mingled also with humour, occasionally descending to farce. How little it was the inspiration of the moment all men were aware who knew his habits; but a singular proof of this was presented by Mr. Moore when he came to write his life; for we there find given to the world, with a frankness which must almost have made their author shake in his grave, the secret note-books of this famous wit; and are thus enabled to trace the jokes, in embryo, with which he had so often made the walls of St. Stephen's shake, in a merriment excited by the happy appearance of sudden unpremeditated effusion.*

The adroitness with which he turned to account sudden occasions

* Take an instance from this author, giving extracts from the Common-place book of the wit:—"He employs his fancy in his narrative and keeps his recollections for his wit." Again, the same idea is expanded into—"When he makes his jokes you applaud the accuracy of his memory, and 'tis only when he states his facts that you admire the flights of his imagination." But the thought was too good to be thus wasted on the desert air of a common-place book. So forth it came at the expense of Kelly, who, having been a composer of music, became a wine merchant. "You will," said the *ready* wit, "import your music and compose your wine." Nor was this service exacted from the old idea thought sufficient—so in the House of Commons an easy and apparently off-hand parenthesis was thus filled with it at Mr. Dundas's cost and charge "(who generally resorts to his memory for his jokes, and to his imagination for his facts)."

of popular excitement, and often at the expense of the Whig party, generally too indifferent to such advantages, and too insensible to the damage they sustained in public estimation, is well known. On the mutiny in the fleet, he was beyond all question right; on the French invasion, and on the attacks upon Napoleon, he was almost as certainly wrong; but these appeals to the people and to the national feelings of the house, tended to make the orator well received, if they added little to the statesman's reputation; and of the latter character he was not ambitious. His most celebrated speech was certainly the one upon the "Begum Charge" in the proceeding against Hastings; and nothing can exceed the accounts left us of its unprecedented success. Not only the practice then first began, which has gradually increased till it greets every good speech, of cheering, on the speaker resuming his seat, but the minister besought the House to adjourn the decision of the question, as being incapacited from forming a just judgment under the influence of such powerful eloquence; while all men on all sides vied with each other in extolling so wonderful a performance. Nevertheless, the opinion has now become greatly prevalent, that a portion of this success was owing to the speech having so greatly surpassed all the speaker's former efforts; to the extreme interest of the topics which the subject naturally presented; and to the artist-like elaboration and beautiful delivery of certain fine passages rather than to the merits of the whole. Certain it is, that the repetition of great part of it, presented in the short-hand notes of the speech on the same charge in Westminster Hall, disappoints every reader who has heard of the success which attended the earlier efforts. In truth, Mr. Sheridan's taste was very far from being chaste, or even moderately correct; he delighted in gaudy figures; he was attracted by glare; and cared not whether the brilliancy came from tinsel or gold, from broken glass or pure diamond; he overlaid his thoughts with epigrammatic diction; he "played to the galleries," and indulged them, of course, with an endless succession of clap-traps. His worst passages by far were those which he evidently preferred himself;—full of imagery often far-fetched, oftener gorgeous, and loaded with point that drew the attention of the hearer away from the thoughts to the words; and his best by far were those where he declaimed, with his deep clear voice, though somewhat thick utterance, with a fierce defiance of some adversary, or an unappeasable vengeance against some oppressive act; or reasoned rapidly, in the like tone, upon some plain matter of fact, or exposed as plainly to homely ridicule some puerile sophism; and in all this, his admirable manner was aided by an eye singularly piercing,* and a countenance which, though coarse, and even in some features gross, was

* It had the singularity of never winking.

yet animated and expressive, and could easily assume the figure of both rage, and menace, and scorn. The few sentences with which he thrilled the House on the liberty of the press in 1810 were worth, perhaps, more than all his elaborate epigrams and forced flowers on the Begum Charge, or all his denunciations of Napoleon; "whose morning orisons and evening prayers are for the conquest of England, whether he bends to the God of Battle or worships the Goddess of Reason;"* certainly far better than such pictures of his power, as his having "thrones for his watch-towers, kings for his sentinels, and for the palisades of his castle, sceptres stuck with crowns." † "Give them," said he in 1810, and in a far higher strain of eloquence, "a corrupt House of Lords; give them a venal House of Commons; give them a tyrannical Prince; give them a truckling Court,—and let me but have an unfettered press; I will defy them to encroach a hair's-breadth upon the liberties of England."‡ Of all his speeches there can be little doubt that the most powerful, as the most chaste, was his reply, in 1805, upon the motion which he had made for repealing the Defence Act. Mr. Pitt had unwarily thrown out a sneer at his support of Mr. Addington, as though it was insidious. Such a stone, cast by a person whose house on that aspect was one pane of glass, could not fail to call down a shower of missiles; and they who witnessed the looks and gestures of the aggressor under the pitiless pelting of the tempest which he had provoked, represent it as certain that there were moments when he intended to fasten a personal quarrel upon the vehement and implacable declaimer.§

When the just tribute of extraordinary admiration has been bestowed upon this great orator, the whole of his praise has been exhausted. As a statesman, he is without a place in any class, or of any rank; it would be incorrect and flattering to call him a bad, or a hurtful, or a short-sighted, or a middling statesman; he was no statesman. As a party man his character stood lower than it deserved, chiefly from certain personal dislikes towards him; for, with the perhaps doubtful exception of his courting popularity at his party's expense on the two occasions already mentioned, and the much more serious charge against him of betraying his party in the Carlton House negotiation of 1812, followed by his extraordinary denial of the facts when he last appeared in Parliament, there can nothing be laid to his charge as inconsistent with the rules of the strictest party duty and honour; although he made as large sacrifices as any unprofessional man ever did to the cause of a long and hopeless Opposition, and was often treated with unmerited coldness and disrespect

* 1802. † 1807. ‡ 1810.

§ Mr. Sheridan wrote this speech during the debate at a Coffee-house near the Hall; and it is reported most accurately in the Parliamentary debates, apparently from his own notes.

by his coadjutors. But as a man, his character stood confessedly low; his intemperate habits, and his pecuniary embarrassments, did not merely tend to imprudent conduct, by which himself alone might be the sufferer; they involved his family in the same fate; and they also undermined those principles of honesty which are so seldom found to survive fallen fortunes, and hardly ever can continue the ornament and the stay of ruined circumstances, when the tastes and the propensities engendered in prosperous times survive through the ungenial season of adversity. Over the frailties and even the faults of genius, it is permitted to draw a veil, after marking them as much as the interests of virtue require, in order to warn against the evil example, and preserve the sacred flame bright and pure from such unworthy and unseemly contamination.

MR. WINDHAM.

Among the members of his party, to whom we have alluded as agreeing ill with Mr. Sheridan, and paying him little deference, Mr. Windham was the most distinguished. The advantages of a refined classical education, a lively wit of the most pungent and yet abstruse description, a turn for subtle reasoning, drawing nice distinctions and pursuing remote analogies, great and early knowledge of the world, familiarity with men of letters and artists, as well as politicians, with Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds, as well as with Fox and North, much acquaintance with constitutional history and principle, a chivalrous spirit, a noble figure, a singularly expressive countenance—all fitted this remarkable person to shine in debate; but were all, when put together, unequal to the task of raising him to the first rank; and were, besides, mingled with defects which exceedingly impaired the impression of his oratory, while they diminished his usefulness and injured his reputation as a statesman. For he was too often the dupe of his own ingenuity; which made him doubt and balance, and gave an oscitancy fatal to vigour in council, as well as most prejudicial to the effects of eloquence, by breaking the force of his blows as they fell. His nature, too, perhaps owing to this hesitating disposition, was to be a follower, if not a worshipper, rather than an original thinker or actor; as if he felt some relief under the doubts which harassed him from so many quarters, in thus taking shelter under a master's wing, and devolving upon a less scrupulous balancer of conflicting reasons, the task of trimming the scales, and forming his opinions for him. Accordingly, first Johnson in private, and afterwards Burke on political matters, were the deities whom he adored;

and he adhered manfully to the strong opinions of the latter, though oftentimes painfully compelled to suppress his sentiments, all the time that he took council with Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, who would only consent to conduct the French war upon principles far lower and more compromising than those of the great anti-Jacobin and anti-Gallican leader. But when untrammelled by official connexion, and having his lips sealed by no decorum or prudence or other observance prescribed by station, it was a brave sight to see this gallant personage descend into the field of debate, panting for the fray, eager to confront any man or any number of men that might prove his match, scorning all the little suggestions of a paltry discretion, heedless of every risk of retort to which he might expose himself, as regardless of popular applause as of Court favour, nay, from his natural love of danger and disdain of everything like fear, rushing into the most offensive expression of the most unpopular opinions with as much alacrity as he evinced in braving the power and daring the enmity of the Crown. Nor was the style of his speaking at all like that of other men's. It was in the easy tone of familiar conversation; but it was full of nice observation and profound remark; it was instinct with classical allusion; it was even over-informed with philosophic and with learned reflection; it sparkled with the finest wit—a wit which was as far superior to Sheridan's, as his to the gambols of the Clown, or the movements of Pantaloon; and his wit, how exuberant soever, still seemed to help on the argument, as well as to illustrate the meaning of the speaker. He was, however, in the main, a serious, a persuasive speaker, whose words plainly flowed from deep and vehement, and long considered, and well-weighed, feelings of the heart. Erat summa gravitas; erat cum gravitate junctus facetiarum et urbinitatis oratorius non scurrilis lepos. Latine loquendi accurata et sine molestiâ diligens elegantia. (*Cic. Brut.*)

The rock on which he so often made shipwreck in debate, and still oftener in council or in action, was that love of paradox, on which the tide of exuberant ingenuity naturally carried him, as it does many others, who, finding so much more may be said in behalf of an untenable position than at first sight appeared possible to themselves, or than ordinary minds can at any time apprehend, begin to bear with the erroneous dogma, and end by adopting it.*

"They first endure, then pity, then embrace."

So he was from the indomitable bravery of his disposition, and his loathing of every thing mean, or that savoured of truckling to mere

* They who have been engaged in professional business with the late Mr. John Clerk (afterwards Lord Eldin) may recollect how often that great lawyer was carried away to entertain paradoxical opinions exactly by the process here described.

power, not unfrequently led to prefer a course of conduct, or a line of argument, because of their running counter to public opinion or the general feeling; instead of confining his disregard to popularity within just bounds, or holding on his course in pursuit of truth and right, in spite of its temporary disfavour with the people. With these errors there was generally much truth mingled, or at least much that was manifestly wronged tinged the tenets or the conduct he was opposing; yet he was not the less an unsafe councillor, and in debate a dangerous ally. His conduct on the Volunteer question, the interference of the City with Military Rewards, the Amusements of the People, and Cruelty to animals, afforded instances of this mixed description, where he was led into error by resisting almost equal error on the opposite hand; yet do these questions always afford proof of the latter part of the foregoing proposition; for what sound or rational view could justify his hostility to all voluntary defence, his reprobation of all expression of public gratitude for the services of our soldiers and sailors, his unqualified defence of bull-baiting, his resistance of all checks upon cruelty towards the brute creation? Upon other subjects of still graver import his paradoxes stood prominent and mischievous; unredeemed by ingenuity, unpalliated by opposite exaggeration, and even unmitigated by any admixture of truth. He defended the Slave Trade, which he had at first opposed, only because the French Royalists were injured by the revolt which their own follies had occasioned in St. Domingo; he resisted all mitigation of our Criminal Law, only because it formed a part of our antiquated jurisprudence, like trial by battle, nay by ordeal of fire and water; and he opposed every project for Educating the People. It required all men's tenderness towards undoubted sincerity and clear disinterestedness to think charitably of such pernicious heresies in such a man. It demanded all this charity and all this faith in the spotless honour of his character, to believe that such opinions could really be the convictions of a mind like his. It was the greatest tribute which could be paid to his sterling merit, his fine parts, his rare accomplishments, that, in spite of such wild aberrations, he was still admired and beloved.

To convey any notion of his oratory by giving passages of his speeches is manifestly impossible. Of the mixed tenderness and figure in which he sometimes indulged, his defence of the military policy pursued by him while in office against the attempts made to change it the year after, might be mentioned; the fine speech, especially, in which, on taking leave of the subject, after comparing the two plans of recruiting our army to a dead stick thrust into the ground and a living sapling planted to take root in the soil, he spoke of carving his name upon the tree as lovers do when they would perpetuate the remembrance of their passions or their misfortunes.

Of his happy allusions to the writings of kindred spirits, an example, but not at all above their average merit, is afforded in his speech upon the peace of Amiens, when he answered the remarks upon the uselessness of the Royal title, then given up, of King of France, by citing the bill of costs brought in by Dean Swift against Marlborough, and the comparative account of the charges of a Roman triumph, where the crown of laurel is set down at twopence. But sometimes he would convulse the House by a happy, startling, and most unexpected allusion; as when on the Walcheren question, speaking of a *coup-de-main* on Antwerp, which had been its professed object, he suddenly said, "A *coup-de-main* in the Scheldt! You might as well talk of a *coup-de-main* in the Court of Chancery." Sir William Grant having just entered and taken his seat, probably suggested this excellent jest; and assuredly no man enjoyed it more. His habitual gravity was overpowered in an instant, and he was seen absolutely to roll about on the bench which he had just occupied. So a word or two artistly introduced would often serve him to cover the adverse argument with ridicule. When arguing that they who would protect animals from cruelty have more on their hands than they are aware of, and that they cannot stop at preventing cruelty, but must also prohibit killing, he was met by the old answer, that we kill them to prevent them overrunning the earth, and then he said in passing, and, as it were parenthetically—"An indifferent reason, by the way, for destroying fish." His two most happy and picturesque, though somewhat caricatured, descriptions of Mr. Pitt's diction, have been already mentioned; that it was a state-paper style, and that he believed he could speak a King's speech off-hand. His gallantry in facing all attacks was shown daily; and how little he cared for allusions to the offensive expressions treasured up against him, and all the more easily remembered because of the epigrams in which he had embalmed them, might be seen from the way he himself would refer to them, as if not wishing they should be forgotten. When some phrase of his, long after it was first used, seemed to invite attack, and a great cheer followed, as if he had unwittingly fallen into the scrape, he stopped, and added, "Why, I said it on purpose!" or, as he pronounced it, "a purpose;" for no man more delighted in the old pronunciation, as well as the pure Saxon idiom of our language, which yet he could enrich and dignify with the importations of classical phraseology.

From what has been said of Mr. Windham's manner of speaking, as well as of his variously embellished mind, it will readily be supposed that in society he was destined to shine almost without a rival. His manners were the most polished, and noble, and courteous, without the least approach to pride, or affectation, or condescension; his spirits were, in advanced life, so gay, that he was always

younger than the youngest of his company; his relish of conversation was such, that after lingering to the latest moment he joined whatever party a sultry evening (or morning, as it might chance to prove) tempted to haunt the streets before retiring to rest. How often have we accompanied him to the door of his own mansion, and then been attended by him to our own, while the streets rang with the peals of his hearty merriment, or echoed the accents of his refined and universal wit! But his conversation, or grave, or gay, or argumentative, or discursive, whether sifting a difficult subject, or painting an interesting character, or pursuing a merely playful fancy, or lively to very drollery, or pensive and pathetic, or losing itself in the clouds of metaphysics, or vexed with paradox, or plain and homely, and all but commonplace, was that which, to be understood, must have been listened to; and while over the whole was flung a veil of unrent classical elegance, through no crevice, had there been any, would ever an unkind or ill-conditioned sentiment have found entrance!

> "Silicet omne sacrum mors importuna profanat
> Omnibus obscuras injicit ille manus—
> Ossa quieta precor, tutâ requiescite in urnâ;
> Et sit humus cineri non onerosa tuo!" *

MR. DUNDAS.

If we turn from those whose common principles and party connexion ranged them against Mr. Pitt, to the only effectual supporter whom he could rely upon as a colleague on the Treasury Bench, we shall certainly find ourselves contemplating a personage of very inferior pretensions, although one whose powers were of the most useful description. Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, had no claim whatever to those higher places among the orators of his age, which were naturally filled by the great men whom we have been describing; nor indeed could he be deemed *inter oratorum numerum* at all. He was a plain, business-like speaker; a man of every-day talents in the House; a clear, easy, fluent, and, from much practice, as well as strong and natural sense, a skilful debater; successful in profiting by an adversary's mistakes; distinct in opening a plan and defending a Ministerial proposition; capable of producing even a

> * Relentless death each purer form profanes,
> Round all that's fair his dismal arms he throws—
> Light lie the earth that shrouds thy loved remains,
> And softly slumbering may they taste repose!

great effect upon his not unwilling audience by his broad and coarse appeals to popular prejudices, and his confident statements of fact—those statements which Sir Francis Burdett once happily observed, "men fall into through an inveterate habit of official assertion." In his various offices no one was more useful. He was an admirable man of business; and those professional habits which he had brought from the bar (where he practised long enough for a youth of his fortunate family to reach the highest official place) were not more serviceable to him in making his speeches perspicuous, and his reasoning logical, than they were in disciplining his mind to the drudgery of the desk, and helping him to systematise, as well as to direct, the machinery of his department. After quitting the profession of the law, to which, indeed, he had for some of the later years of Lord North's Administration only nominally belonged, and leaving also the office of Lord Advocate, which he retained for several years after, he successively filled the place of Minister for India, for the Home and War Departments, and for Naval Affairs. But it was in the first of these capacities, while at the head of the India Board, and while Chairman of the Committee of the Commons upon India, that his great capacity for affairs shone chiefly forth; and that he gave solid and long-continued proof of an indefatigable industry, which neither the distractions of debate in Parliament, nor the convival habits of the man and of the times, ever could interrupt or relax. His celebrated Reports upon all the complicated questions of our Asiatic policy, although they may not stand a comparison with some of Mr. Burke's, in the profundity and enlargement of general views, any more than their style can be compared with his, are nevertheless performances of the greatest merit, and repositories of information upon that vast subject, unrivalled for clearness and extent. They, together with Lord Wellesley's Despatches, form the sources from which the bulk of all the knowledge possessed upon Indian matters is to be derived by the statesmen of the present day.

If in his official departments, and in the contests of Parliament, Mr. Dundas rendered able service, and possessed great weight, it was in Scotland, his native country, whose language he spoke, and whose whole affairs he directed, that his power and his authority chiefly prevailed. Before the reform in our representation and our municipal institutions, the undisturbed possession of patronage by a leading member of the Government, was very sure to carry along with it a paramount influence, both over the representatives of this ancient kingdom and over their constituents. Why the submission to men in high place, and endowed with the power of conferring many favours, should have been so much more absolute in the northern than in the southern parts of our island, it would be need-

less to inquire. Whether it arose from the old feudal habits of the nation, or from its poverty, joined with a laudable ambition to rise in the world above the pristine station, or from the wary and provident character of the people; certain it is, that they displayed a devotion for their political superiors, and a belief in their infallibility, which would have done no discredit to the clansmen of those chieftain's who, whilom, both granted out the lands of the sept, retained the stipulated services of the vassal, and enjoyed the rights of jurisdiction and of punishment, whereby obedience was secured, and zealous attachment stimulated in its alliance with wholesome terror.

That Mr. Dundas enjoyed this kind of ministerial sovereignty and received this homage in a more ample measure than any of his predecessors, was, no doubt, owing partly to the unhesitating and unqualified determination which regulated his conduct, of devoting his whole patronage to the support of his party, and to the extent of that patronage, from his being so long minister for India, as well as having the whole Scottish preferment at his absolute disposal: but it was also in part owing to the engaging qualities of the man. A steady and determined friend, who only stood the faster by those that wanted him the more; nay, who even in their errors or their faults would not give up his adherents: an agreeable companion, from the joyous hilarity of his manners; void of all affectation, all pride, all pretension; a kind and affectionate man in the relations of private life; and although not always sufficiently regardful of strict decorum in certain particulars, yet never putting on the Pharisee's garb, or affecting a more "gracious state" than he had attained; friendly, self-denying to those inferiors in his department whose comforts so much depended upon him; in his demeanour hearty and good-humoured to all—it is difficult to figure any one more calculated to win over those whom his mere power and station had failed to attach; or better fitted to retain the friends whom accident or influence might originally have attached to his person. That he should for so many years have disposed of the votes in Parliament of nearly the whole Scottish commoners, and the whole Peers, was, therefore, little to be wondered at; that his popularity and influence in the country at large should have been boundless during all this period, is as easily to be understood. There was then no doubt ever raised of the ministry's stability, or of Mr. Dundas's ample share in the dispensation of its favours. The political sky was clear and settled to the very verge of the horizon. There was nothing to disturb the hearts of anxious mortals. The wary and pensive Scot felt sure of his election, if he but kept by the true faith; and his path lay straight before him —the path of righteous devotion leading unto a blessed preferment. But our Northern countrymen were fated to be visited by some troubles. The heavens became overcast; their luminary was for a

while concealed from devout eyes; in vain they sought him, but he was not. Uncouth names began to be named. More than two parties were talked of. Instead of the old, convenient, and intelligible alternative of "Pitt or Fox"—"place or poverty,"—which left no doubt in any rational mind which of the two to choose, there was seen—strange sight!—hateful and perplexing omen!—a Ministry without Pitt, nay, without Dundas, and an Opposition leaning towards its support. Those who are old enough to remember that dark interval, may recollect how the public mind in Scotland was subdued with awe, and how men awaited in trembling silence the uncertain event, as all living things quail during the solemn pause that precedes an earthquake.

It was in truth a crisis to try men's souls. For a while all was uncertainty and consternation; all were seen fluttering about like birds in an eclipse or a thunder-storm; no man could tell whom he might trust; nay, worse still, no man could tell of whom he might ask anything. It was hard to say, not who were in office, but who were likely to remain in office. All true Scots were in dismay and distraction. It might truly be said they knew not which way to look, or whither to turn. Perhaps it might be yet more truly said, that they knew not *when* to turn. But such a crisis was too sharp to last; it passed away; and then was to be seen a proof of Mr. Dundas's power amongst his countrymen, which transcended all expectation, and almost surpassed belief, if indeed it is not rather to be viewed as an evidence of the acute foresight—the political second-sight—of the Scottish nation. The trusty band in both Houses actually were found adhering to him against the existing Government; nay, he held the proxies of many Scottish Peers in open opposition! Well might his colleague exclaim to the hapless Addington in such unheard-of troubles, "Doctor, the Thanes fly from us!" When the very Scotch Peers wavered, and when the Grampian hills might next be expected to move about, it was time to think that the end of all things was at hand; and the return of Pitt and security, and patronage and Dundas, speedily ensued to bless old Scotland, and reward her providence or her fidelity—her attachment at once to her patron, and to herself.

The subject of Lord Melville cannot be left complete without some mention of the event which finally deprived him of place and of power, though it hardly ever lowered him in the respect and affections of his countrymen. We allude, of course, to the Resolutions carried by Mr. Whitbread on the 8th of April, 1805, with the Speaker's casting voice, which led to the immediate resignation, and subsequent impeachment of this distinguished person. Mr. Pitt defended him strenuously, and only was compelled to abandon his friend and colleague, by the vote of the Commons, which gave him

a "bitter pang," that as he pronounced the word made the hall resound, and seems yet to fill the ear. But after his death, while the Government was in his rival's hands, and all the offices of the State were filled with the enemies of the accused, Lord Melville was brought to trial before his Peers, and by a large majority acquitted, to the almost universal satisfaction of the country. Have we any right to regard him as guilty after this proceeding? It is true that the spirit of party is charged with the event of this memorable trial; but did nothing of that spirit preside over the proceedings in the Commons, the grand inquest of the nation, which made the presentment, and put the accused upon his trial? That Lord Melville was a careless man and wholly indifferent about money, his whole life had shown. That he had replaced the entire sum temporarily used, was part even of the statement which charged him with misemploying it. That Mr. Pitt, whom no one ever accused of corruption, had been a party to two of his supporters' using four times as much of the public money for a time, and without paying interest, was soon after proved; though for the purpose of pressing more severely upon Lord Melville, a great alacrity was shown to acquit the Prime Minister, by way of forming contrast to the Treasurer of the Navy. In a word, the case proved against him was not by any means so clear as to give us the right to charge the great majority of his Peers with corrupt and dishonourable conduct in acquitting him; while it is a known fact that the Judges who attended the trial were, with the exception of the Lord Chief Justice, all clearly convinced of his innocence. Nor, let it be added, would the charge against him have been deemed, in the times of the Harleys and the Walpoles, of a nature to stain his character. Witness Walpole rising to supreme power after being expelled the House of Commons for corruption; and after having only urged in his own defence, that the thousand pounds paid to him by a contractor had been for the use of a friend whom he desired to favour, and to whom he had paid it all over; not to mention his having received above seventeen thousand pounds under circumstances of the gravest suspicion, the day before he quitted office, and which he never seems to have accounted for, except by saying he had the King's authority to take it.(1) It is very

* Mr. Coxe, in his Life of Walpole, cannot, of course, put the defence on higher ground than Walpole himself took, as to the 1000*l.* received on the contract, in 1711, when he was Secretary at War. As to the sum reported by the House of Commons' Committee (17,461*l.*) to have been obtained by him in 1712, on the authority of two Treasury orders, the biographer's main argument is, that the money must have been immediately wanted for public purposes, though these never were particularised, and that the King must have approved of the draft, because he signed the warrants. A weaker defence cannot well be conceived; nor is it much aided by the assertion which follows, that Sir Robert began writing a vindication of himself, which he broke off "on a conviction that his answer must either have been

certain that these remarks will give little satisfaction to those whose political principles have always kept them apart from, and inimical to Lord Melville. But to what purpose have men lived for above thirty years after the trial, and survived the object of the charge more than a quarter of a century, if they cannot now, and upon a mere judicial question, permit their judgments to have a free scope, —deciding calmly upon events that belong to the history of the past, and involve the reputation of the dead?

MR. ERSKINE.

The Ministry of Mr. Pitt did not derive more solid service from the Bar in the person of Mr. Dundas, than the Opposition party did ornament and popularity in that of Mr. Erskine. His Parliamentary talents, although they certainly have been underrated, were as clearly not the prominent portion of his character. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, had he appeared in any other period than the age of the Foxes, the Pitts, and the Burkes, there is little chance that he would have been eclipsed even as a debater; and the singular eloquence and powerful effect of his famous speech against the Jesuits' Bark Bill in the House of Lords,* abundantly proves this position. He never appears to have given his whole mind to the practice of debating; he had a very scanty provision of political information; his time was always occupied with the laborious pursuits of his profession; he came into the House of Commons, where he stood among several equals, and behind some superiors, from a stage where he shone alone, and without a rival; above all, he was accustomed to address a select and friendly audience, bound to lend him their patient attention, and to address them by the compulsion of his retainer, not as a volunteer coming forward in his own person; a position from

materially defective, or he must have related many things highly improper to be exposed to the public." The fact of a man, with an estate of about 2000*l.* a-year at first, and which never rose to much above 4000*l.*, having lived extravagantly, and amassed above 200,000*l.*, is not at all explained by Mr. Coxe; and it is mainly on this expensive living and accumulation of fortune, that the suspicions which hung over his memory rest. But it is needless to say more upon a topic which could form no justification of Lord Melville, if he were guilty. The subject is only alluded to in this place for the purpose of showing how much more pure our public men now are, and how higher is our standard of official virtue. The acquittal of Lord Melville was deemed insufficient to sanction his restoration to office; although Sir Robert Walpole, without any attempt to rescind the vote of 1712, was afterwards advanced to the place of Prime Minister, and held it for twenty years.

* 1808.

which the transition is violent and extreme, to that of having to gain and to keep a promiscuous and, in great part, hostile audience, not under any obligation to listen one instant beyond the time during which the speaker can flatter, or interest, or amuse them. Earlier practice and more devotion to the pursuit, would doubtless have vanquished all these disadvantages; but they sufficed to keep Mr. Erskine always in a station far beneath his talents, as long as he remained in the House of Commons.

It is to the Forum, and not the Senate, that we must hasten, if we would witness the "coronam multiplicem, judicium erectum, crebras assensiones, multas admirationes, risum cum velit, cum velit fletum, in Scenâ Roscium;" in fine, if we would see this great man in his element and his glory. Nor let it be deemed trivial, or beneath the historian's province, to mark that noble figure, every look of whose countenance is expressive, every motion of whose form graceful; an eye that sparkles and pierces, and almost assures victory, while it "speaks audience ere the tongue." Juries have declared that they felt impossible to remove their looks from him when he had riveted and, as it were, fascinated them by his first glance; and it used to be a common remark of men who observed his motions, that they resembled those of a blood-horse; as light, as limber, as much betokening strength and speed, as free from all gross superfluity or incumbrance. Then hear his voice of surpassing sweetness, clear, flexible, strong, exquisitely fitted to strains of serious earnestness, deficient in compass, indeed, and much less fitted to express indignation or even scorn than pathos, but wholly free from either harshness or monotony. All these, however, and even his chaste, dignified, and appropriate action, were very small parts of this wonderful advocate's excellence. He had a thorough knowledge of men—of their passions and their feelings—he knew every avenue to the heart, and could at will make all its chords vibrate to his touch. His fancy, though never playful in public, where he had his whole faculties under the most severe control, was lively and brilliant; when he gave it vent and scope, it was eminently sportive; but while representing his client, it was wholly subservient to that in which his whole soul was wrapped up, and to which each faculty of body and of mind was subdued, the success of the cause. His argumentative powers were of the highest order; clear in his statements, close in his applications, unwearied and never to be diverted in his deductions; with a quick and sure perception of his point, and undeviating in the pursuit of whatever established it; endued with a nice discernment of the relative importance and weight of different arguments, and the faculty of assigning to each its proper place, so as to bring forward the main body of the reasoning in bold relief, and with its full breadth, and not weaken its effect by distracting and dis-

turbing the attention of the audience among lesser particulars. His understanding was eminently legal; though he had never made himself a great lawyer, yet could he conduct a purely legal argument with the most perfect success; and his familiarity with all the ordinary matters of his profession was abundantly sufficient for the purposes of the forum. His memory was accurate and retentive in an extraordinary degree; nor did he ever, during the trial of a cause, forget any matter, how trifling soever, that belonged to it. His presence of mind was perfect in action, that is, before the jury, when a line is to be taken upon the instant, and a question risked to a witness, or a topic chosen with the tribunal, on which the whole fate of the cause may turn. No man made fewer mistakes; none left so few advantages unimproved; before none was it so dangerous for an adversary to slumber and be off his guard; for he was ever broad awake himself, and was as adventurous as he was skilful; and as apt to take advantage of any the least opening, as he was cautious to leave none in his own battle.

But to all these qualities he joined that fire, that spirit, that courage, which gave vigour and direction to the whole, and bore down all resistance. No man, with all his address and prudence, ever adventured upon more bold figures, and they were uniformly successful; for his imagination was vigorous enough to sustain any flight; his taste was correct, and even severe, and his execution felicitous in the highest degree. Without much familiar knowledge of even the Latin classics; with hardly any access to the beauties of the Attic eloquence, whether in prose or verse; with no skill in modern languages, his acquaintance with the English tongue was yet so perfect, and his taste so exquisite, that nothing could exceed the beauty of his diction, whatever subject he attempted; whether discoursing on the most humble topics, of the most ordinary case in court or in society, or defending men for their lives, under the persecution of tyrannical power, wrestling against the usurpations of Parliament in favour of the liberty of the press, and upholding against the assaults of the infidel the fabric of revealed religion. Indeed the beauty, as well as chaste simplicity, of the language in which he would clothe the most lowly subjects reminded the classical scholar of some narratives in the Odyssey, where there is not one idea that rises above the meanest level, and yet all is made graceful and elegant by the magic of the diction. Aware that his classical acquirements were so slender, men oftentimes marvelled at the phenomenon of his eloquence, above all, of his composition. The solution of the difficulty lay in the constant reading of the old English authors to which he devoted himself: Shakspeare he was more familiar with than almost any man of his age; and Milton he nearly had by heart. Nor

can it be denied that the study of the speeches in "Paradise Lost," is as good a substitute as can be found for the immortal originals in the Greek models, upon which those great productions have manifestly been formed.

Such was his oratory; but oratory is only the half, and the lesser half of the *Nisi Prius* advocate; and Mr. Erskine never was known to fail in the more important moiety of the part he had to sustain. The entire devotion to his cause which made him reject every thing that did not help it forward, and indignantly scorn all temptation to sacrifice its smallest point for any rhetorical triumph, was not the only virtue of his advocacy. His judgment was quick, sound, and sure, upon each successive step to be taken; his decision bold, but cautious and enlightened, at each turn. His speaking was hardly more perfect than his examination of witnesses, the art in which so much of an English advocate's skill is shown; and his examination-in-chief was as excellent as his cross-examination; a department so apt to deceive the vulgar, and which yet is, generally speaking, far less available, as it hardly ever is more difficult than the examination-in-chief, or in reply. In all these various functions, whether of addressing the jury, or urging objections to the court, or examining his own witnesses, or cross-examining his adversary's, this consummate advocate appeared to fill at one and the same time different characters; to act as the council and representative of the party, and yet to be the very party himself; while he addressed the tribunal, to be also acquainted with every feeling and thought of the judge or the jury; and while he interrogated the witness, whether to draw from him all he knew and in the most favourable shape, or to shake and displace all he had said that was adverse, he appeared to have entered into the mind of the person he was dealing with, and to be familiar with all that was passing within it. It is by such means that the hearer is to be moved, and the truth ascertained; and he will ever be the most successful advocate who can approach the nearest to this lofty and difficult position.

The speeches of this great man are preserved to us with a care and correctness which those only of Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Mr. Canning, and Lord Dudley, among all the orators of whom this work treats, can boast. He had a great facility of composition; he wrote both much and correctly. The five volumes which remain were all revised by himself; most of them at the several times of their first publication. Mr. Windham, too, is known to have left most of his speeches written out correctly in his own hand. The same care was bestowed upon their speeches by the others just named. Neither those of Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt, nor, with one or two exceptions, of Mr. Sheridan, ever enjoyed the same advantages; and a most unfair

estimate would therefore be formed of their eloquence, as compared with that of others, were men only to build their judgment upon the record which the Parliamentary Debates present.

Of Mr. Erskine's, the first, beyond all doubt, was his speech for Stockdale, foolishly and oppressively prosecuted by the House of Commons, for publishing the Reverend Mr. Logan's eloquent tract upon Hastings's impeachment. There are no finer things in modern, and few finer in ancient eloquence than the celebrated passage of the Indian Chief; nor has beautiful language ever been used with more curious felicity to raise a striking and an appropriate image before the mind, than in the simile of the winds "lashing before them the lazy elements, which without the tempest would stagnate into pestilence." The speeches on Constructive Treason are also noble performances; in which the reader never can forget the sublimity of the denunciation against those who took from the "file the sentence against Sidney, which should have been left on record to all ages, that it might arise and blacken in the sight, like the handwriting on the wall before the Eastern tyrant, to deter from outrages upon justice." One or two of the speeches upon Seduction, especially that for the defendant in *Howard* v. *Bingham*, are of exquisite beauty.

It remains that we commemorate the deeds which he did, and which cast the fame of his oratory into the shade. He was an undaunted man; he was an undaunted advocate. To no Court did he ever truckle, neither to the Court of the King, neither to the Court of the King's Judges. Their smiles and their frowns he disregarded alike in the fearless discharge of his duty. He upheld the liberty of the press against the one; he defended the rights of the people against both combined to destroy them. If there be yet amongst us the power of freely discussing the acts of our rulers; if there be yet the privilege of meeting for the promotion of needful reforms; if he who desires wholesome changes in our Constitution be still recognised as a patriot, and not doomed to die the death of a traitor; let us acknowledge with gratitude, that to this great man, under Heaven, we owe this felicity of the times. In 1794, his dauntless energy, his indomitable courage, kindling his eloquence, inspiring his conduct, giving direction and lending firmness to his matchless skill, resisted the combination of statesmen, and princes, and lawyers—the league of cruelty and craft, formed to destroy our liberties—and triumphantly scattered to the winds the half-accomplished scheme of an unsparing proscription. Before such a precious service as this well may the lustre of statesmen and of orators grow pale; and yet this was the achievement of one only not the first orator of his age, and not among its foremost statesmen, because he was beyond all comparison the most accomplished advocate, and the most eloquent, that modern times have produced.

The disposition and manners of the man were hardly less attractive than his genius and his professional skill were admirable. He was, like almost all great men, simple, natural, and amiable; full of humane feelings and kindly affections. Of wit, he had little or none in conversation; and he was too gay to take any delight in discussion; but his humour was playful to buoyancy, and wild even to extravagance; and he indulged his roaming and devious and abrupt imagination as much in society, as in public he kept it under rigorous control. That his private character was exempt from failings can in no wise be affirmed. The egotism which was charged upon his conversation, and in which he only seemed to adopt the habit of the forensic leaders of his times, was wholly unmixed with anything offensive to others; though it might excite a smile at his own expense. Far from seeking to raise himself by their depression, his vanity was of the best-natured and least selfish kind; it was wholly social and tolerant, and, as it were, gregarious; nay, he always seemed to extol the deeds of others with fully more enthusiasm than he ever displayed in recounting his own. But there were darker places to be marked, in the extreme imprudence with which some indulgences were sought, and unfortunate connexions, even late in life, formed. Lord Kenyon, who admired and loved him fervently, and used always to appear as vain of him as a schoolmaster of his favourite pupil, though himself rigorous to the point of ascetism, was wont to call these imperfections, viewing them tolerantly, "spots in the sun;" and it must with sorrow be added, that as the lustre of the luminary became more dim, the spots did not contract in their dimensions. The usual course on such occasions is to say, *Taceamus de his*,—but History neither asserts her greatest privilege, nor discharges her higher duties, when, dazzled by brilliant genius, or astonished by splendid triumphs, or even softened by amiable qualities, she abstains from marking those defects which so often degrade the most sterling worth, and which the talents and the affections that they accompany may sometimes seduce men to imitate.

The striking and imposing appearance of this great man's person has been mentioned. His Herculean strength of constitution may also be noted. During the eight-and-twenty years that he practised at the bar, he never was prevented for one hour from attending to his professional duties. At the famous State Trials in 1794, he lost his voice on the evening before he was to address the Jury. It returned to him just in time, and this, like other felicities of his career, he always ascribed to a special providence, with the habitually religious disposition of mind which was hereditary in the godly families that he sprung from.

MR. PERCEVAL.

A PERSON of great eminence, who, like Mr. Erskine, arose from the Bar, where, however, he never distinguished himself much, was Mr. Perceval, a man of very quick parts, much energy of character, dauntless courage, joined to patient industry, practised fluency as a speaker, great skill and readiness as a debater; but of no information beyond what a classical education gives the common run of English youths. Of views upon all things the most narrow, upon religious and even political questions the most bigoted and intolerant, his range of mental vision was confined in proportion to his ignorance on all general subjects. Within that sphere he saw with extreme acuteness,—as the mole is supposed to be more sharp-sighted than the eagle for half a quarter of an inch before it; but as beyond the limits of his little horizon he saw no better than the mole, so like her, he firmly believed, and always acted on the belief, that beyond what he could descry nothing whatever existed; and he mistrusted, dreaded, and even hated all who had an ampler visual range than himself. But here, unhappily, all likeness ceases between the puny animal and the powerful statesman. Beside the manifest sincerity of his convictions, attested, perhaps, by his violence and rancour, he possessed many qualities, both of the head and the heart, which strongly recommended him to the confidence of the English people. He never scared them with refinements, nor alarmed their fears by any sympathy with improvements out of the old and beaten track; and he shared largely in all their favourite national prejudices. A devoted adherent to the Crown, and a pious son of the Church, he was dear to all who celebrate their revels by libations to Church and King—most of whom regard the clergy as of far more importance than the gospel—all of whom are well enough disposed to set the monarch above the law. Add to this, the accidental qualification of high birth, in a family excessively attached to the Court and the Establishment, and still more the real virtues which adorned his character; a domestic life without stain, an exemplary discharge of the duties that devolve on the father of a numerous family, a punctual performance of all his obligations, a temper which, though quick and even irritable, was generally good, a disposition charitable and kind where the rancour of party or sect left his nature free scope. From all sordid feelings he was entirely exempt—regardless of pecuniary interest—careless of mere fortune—aiming at power alone—and only suffering his ambition to be restrained by its intermixture with his fiery zeal for the success of his cherished principles, religious

and civil. The whole character thus formed, whether intellectual or moral, was eminently fitted to command the respect and win the favour of a nation whose prejudices are numerous and deep-rooted, and whose regard for the decencies of private life readily accepts a strict observance of them as a substitute for almost any political defect, and a compensation for many political crimes.

The eloquence of Mr. Perceval, any more than his capacity, was not of the highest order; although, like his capacity, it was always strenuously exerted, and sometimes extremely powerful. He was a person of acute and quick rather than of great faculties. At the bar his success was assured, if he had not deviated into politics; giving a rival to that mistress which is jealous to excess of the least infidelity in her suitor. The nimbleness of mind and industry of application which then distinguished him he brought into the House of Commons; and differing from other lawyers, he was always so lively as to be heard without any effort in a place far enough from being enamoured with the gown. As Attorney-General to Mr. Addington, and bearing almost the whole burthen of the unequal debate, while the forces of Fox, Pitt, and Windham combined to assail the meagre Treasury Bench, his talents sparkled with peculiar brightness. His dexterity in any great or any personal conflict; his excellent language, always purely but unaffectedly English, nor ever chargeable with incorrect taste; his attention constantly awake, and his spirit ever dauntless, nay, rather rising with the emergency—gained him the greatest reputation as a ready and a powerful debater.' When quitting the profession in 1807, and taking the lead of the House of Commons, he appeared as the first minister in all but name, and afterwards on the Duke of Portland's death, had the title with the functions of Premier, his success was inferior; and he did not for some time act up to the reputation which he had gained in the subordinate and half-professional station.

But the debates upon the Regency in 1811, when he fought, almost single-handed, a battle for royal prerogative against constitutional principle; with the prospect of the Regent being his principal opponent, as his original connexion with Queen Caroline had made him his implacable enemy—these contests drew forth all his abilities, and placed him at once in the highest rank of debaters. His party too were popular in the country, fond of Kings, particularly attached to George III., distrustful and averse towards his successor; above all, deeply revering the Established Church, whose selected and zealous champion the minister had long been. His manner of speaking, familiar though quick, lively, smart, yet plain upon the whole, and offending no one by figures or by tropes, was exceedingly popular in the House of Commons, where the dullest have no dislike to an acute and clear leader, so he be not over-brilliant and witty. He was a

man of business too, in all his habits both of living and of speaking; opening a dry question of finance or regulation, with as great spirit as he would reply to a personal attack: above all, his gallantry in debate well fitted him for a leader. Whoever might quail before a powerful adversary, or faint under the pressure of a bad cause, or take fright in a storm of popular contention and even indignation, he was none of these; rather the louder raged the tempest, so much the shriller rose the voice that called his forces together, and united them for the work of the day, whether to face the enemy or to weather the gale. Even in 1809, when the firmness of the Royal family and the Ministry was sorely tried,—but above all, of him, a pattern of morality, a strict observer of ordinances, a somewhat intolerant exactor of piety in others, of him who, beyond all men, must have found it hard to face the moral or religious indignation of the whole country, roused by the veil being for a moment torn rudely aside which had hitherto covered over the tender immoralities of Royal life—even then the person most likely to be struck down by the blast, was the first to face it, and to struggle on manfully through the whole of that difficult crisis, as if he had never spoken of the Church, and the moral law, and wives and children, and domestic ties, and the profligacy of courts,—as if the people of all sects and all classes were looking on, the calm spectators of an ordinary debate. The public voice rendered him on this occasion the justice ever done to men who show in performing their duty that they have the courage to disregard clamour, and to rely upon their reputation as a shield against misconstruction. No stain rested upon his character from his gallant defence of the Duke of York; and they who were successful in attacking the fair fame of the Prince, failed in all their attempts to blacken his official defender. In the next Session, he met Parliament with a Ministry crippled by the loss of both Mr. Canning's eloquence, and Lord Castlereagh's manly courage, and long experience of affairs,—met it too, after such a signal calamity as never before had attended any failure of the Government in its military operations. But he again presented the same undaunted front to all perils; and having happily obtained the co-operation of Lord Wellesley, and continuing to enjoy the benefit of his illustrious brother's victories, he again triumphed over all opposition, until the Prince Regent's desertion of his friends seemed to give the Tory party a lease of their places during his life.

This eminent person's career was cut short while in the midst of the most difficult struggle of all in which he was fated to engage. The influence of his friend Mr. Stephen over his mind was unbounded. Agreeing on all political questions, and alike in the strength of their religious feelings, although the one leant towards the High Church party, and the other was a Low Churchman, upon

all questions connected with neutral rights, he in an especial manner deferred to the opinion of him whose professional life had been chiefly passed in the discussion of them. Accordingly, the measure of the Orders in Council devised by him was readily adopted by the minister, who, never giving either his support or his opposition by halves, always flung himself into any cause which he espoused with as much zeal as if it were his own. Add to this, his hearty and deep-rooted hatred of Napoleon, whom he regarded with the true feelings of the people, as he accurately represented their national prejudices—his scorn of the Americans, whom he disliked with the animosity peculiar to all the courtiers of George III.—his truly English feeling in favour of obtaining through the war a monopoly of all trade, and bringing into London and Bristol the commerce of the world—all these desires were gratified, and these feelings, indulged by a system which, under the mask of retaliation upon France, professed to extinguish, or to absorb into our own commerce, the trade of all the neutrals whom France had oppressed in order to injure us; and Mr. Perceval thus became as strenuous a champion of this unjust and preposterous plan as its author himself. In 1808 he had prevailed with parliament to give it a full trial; and in four years, instead of collecting all the trade of the world into England, it had effectually ruined whatever Napoleon's measures had left of our own.

Accordingly, a motion was carried at the end of April, 1812, for examining the question in a committee of the whole house, and in taking the evidence which was adduced to show the ruinous effects of the system, he with Mr. Stephen bore night after night the principal part. As they both hoped that the clamour out of doors would subside if time were given, the struggle always was to put off the inquiry, and thus to protract the decision; and Messrs. Brougham and Baring, who conducted it, with some difficulty prevailed so far as to begin the examination of the witnesses exactly at half-past four o'clock. On the 11th of May, Mr. Perceval had been later than the appointed time, and after complaining of this delay, Mr. Brougham, at a quarter before five, had called his first witness, and was examining him, when a messenger deputed to bring the minister, met him walking towards the house with Mr. Stephen arm-in-arm. He instantly, with his accustomed activity, darted forward to obey the summons, but for which Mr. Stephen, who happened to be on his left side, would have been the victim of the assassin's blow, which prostrated Mr. Perceval as he entered the lobby. The wretched man, by name Bellingham, had no kind of quarrel with him; but complained of a suit at St. Petersburgh having been neglected by our ambassador there, Lord Granville, whom he intended to have destroyed had not Mr. Perceval fallen first in his way. He never at-

tempted to escape; but was taken, committed, tried, condemned, executed, dissected, all within one week from the time that he fired the shot. So great an outrage upon justice never was witnessed in modern times; for the application to delay the trial, until evidence of his insanity could be brought from Liverpool, was refused, and the trial proceeded, while both the court, the witnesses, the jury, and the people, were under the influence of the feelings naturally excited by the deplorable slaughter of one of the most eminent and virtuous men in any rank of the community.

It has been said already that Mr. Perceval was both imperfectly educated and very narrow minded. He was the slave of violent prejudices, and had never made any effort to shake them off, or to mitigate them by instructing himself in any of the branches of learning out of his own profession, save only that he had the ordinary portion of classical learning which all English gentlemen acquire in their early youth. How amiable soever in private life, he was intolerant of others who differed with him in the proportion of his ignorance, and committed the error of all such conscientious but bigoted men, the forgetting that those of opposite sentiments have exactly the same excuse for unyielding obstinacy that they have for rooted dislike towards adverse doctrines. They feel all the heat of intolerance, but make no kind of allowance for others feeling somewhat of the fire which burns so fiercely within themselves.

LORD GRENVILLE.

The two eminent personages of whom we have been speaking, were Mr. Pitt's contemporaries and political adherents, though of a less advanced age. But Lord Grenville was of his own standing, followed his fortune during the eventful period of the coalesced opposition and the first French war, left office with him in 1810, nor quitted him until he consented to resume it in 1804, preferring place to character, and leaving the Whigs, by whose help he had overthrown the Addington Administration. From that moment Lord Grenville joined the Whig party, with whom to the end of his public life he continued to act.

A greater accession to the popular cause and the Whig party it was impossible to imagine, unless Mr. Pitt himself had persevered in his desire of rejoining the standard under which his first and noblest battles were fought. All the qualities in which their long opposition and personal habits made them deficient, Lord Grenville possessed in an eminent degree; long habits of business had matured

his experience and disciplined his naturally vigorous understanding; a life studiously regular had surrounded him with the respect of his countrymen, and of those whom the dazzling talents of others could not blind to their loose propensities or idle talents; a firm attachment to the Church as by law established attracted towards him the confidence of those who subscribe to its doctrines and approve its discipline; while his tried prudence and discretion were a balance much wanted against the opposite defects of the Whig party, and especially of their most celebrated leader.

After Mr. Grattan, it would be difficult to point out any person to whom the great and fundamental question of Irish Policy, and the cause of religious liberty in general, was so much indebted as Lord Grenville;* while, in the sacrifices which he made to it, he certainly exceeded Mr. Grattan himself. He was enabled to render this valuable service to his country, not more by his natural abilities, which were of a very high order—sound judgment, extraordinary memory, an almost preternatural power of application—and by the rich stores of knowledge which those eminent qualities had put him in possession of, than by the accidental circumstances in his previous history and present position—his long experience in office, which had tried and matured his talents in times of unexampled difficulty—his connexion with Mr. Pitt, both in the kindred of blood and of place, so well fitted to conciliate the Tory party, or at all events to disarm their hostility, and lull their suspicions—above all, the well-known and steady attachment of himself and his family to the principles and the establishment of the Church of England.

When, therefore, he quitted power with Mr. Pitt in 1801, rather than abandon Catholic Emancipation, the carrying of which had only a year before been held out as one of the principal objects of the Union; and when, in 1804, he peremptorily refused to join Mr. Pitt in resuming office, unless a ministry should be formed upon a basis wide enough to comprehend the Whig party; the cause of liberal, tolerant principles, but, above all, the Irish question, gained an able supporter, whose alliance, whether his intrinsic or accidental qualities were considered, might justly be esteemed beyond

* The plan of this work of course precludes all reference, at least all detailed reference, to the conduct and the merits of living statesmen. But for this an ample field would be opened, in which to expatiate upon the transcendant services of Lord Grey, and the ample sacrifices which he made, during the greater part of his political life, to the rights and the interests of the Irish people. Lord Wellesley's services in the same cause, it is also, for the same reason, impossible to enter upon, further than to remind the reader that, after having almost begun life as the advocate of the Catholic claims, he, and after him Lord Anglesey, first set the example to succeeding Viceroys of ruling Ireland with the most perfect justice to all parties, and holding the balance of favour even with a steady hand, between Catholic and Protestant, Churchman and Dissenter.

all price. The friends of civil and religious liberty duly valued this most important accession; and the distinguished statesman whom they now accounted as one of their most powerful champions, and trusted as one of their most worthy leaders, amply repaid the confidence reposed in him, by the steady and disinterested devotion which, with his characteristic integrity and firmness, he gave to the cause. Taking office with Mr. Fox, and placed at the head of the government, upon the death of that great man, he peremptorily, and with bare courtesy, rejected all the overtures of the King to separate from the Whigs, and rejoin his ancient allies of the Pitt school. Soon afterwards, in firm union with the remains of the Fox party, he carried the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and retired from power, rather than bind himself not to press the Catholic Emancipation upon the narrow-minded though conscientious Prince whom he served. Continuing in close alliance with the Whigs, he shared with them the frowns of the Court and the habitual exclusion from office which has, for the most part, been their portion in public life. Nor can it be doubted that the perseverance with which he abided by his declared opinions in favour of the Catholic Question alone prevented him from presiding over the councils of his country, during, at the least, twenty years of his life. They who have come to the aid of the liberal cause only when its success made an adhesion to it the road to Court favour, with all its accompaniments of profit and of power, have a very different account of mutual obligation to settle with their country, from that which Lord Grenville could at any time since his retirement have presented, but disdained ever even to hint at. But they who, after his powerful advocacy, his inflexible integrity, his heavy sacrifices, had all but carried the Irish question, have come forward to finish the good work, and have reaped every kind of gratification from doing their duty, instead of making a sacrifice of their interests like him, would do well, while they usurp all the glory of these successes, to recollect the men whose labours, requited with proscription, led the way to comparatively insignificant exertions, still more beneficial to the individuals that made them, than advantageous to the cause they served.

The endowments of this eminent statesman's mind were all of a useful and commanding sort—sound sense, steady memory, vast industry. His acquirements were in the same proportion valuable and lasting—a thorough acquaintance with business in its principles and in its details; a complete mastery of the science of politics, as well theoretical as practical; of late years a perfect familiarity with political economy, and a just appreciation of its importance; an early and most extensive knowledge of classical literature, which he improved instead of abandoning, down to the close of his life; a taste formed upon those chaste models, and of which his lighter compositions, his Greek

and Latin verses, bore testimony to the very last. His eloquence was of a plain, masculine, authoritative cast, which neglected if it did not despise ornament, and partook in the least possible degree of fancy, while its declamation was often equally powerful with its reasoning and its statement.

The faults of his character were akin to some of the excellencies which so greatly distinguished it; his firmness was apt to degenerate into obstinacy; his confidence in the principles he held was not unmixed with contempt for those who differed from him. His unbending honesty and straightforward course of dealing with all men and all subjects not unfrequently led him to neglect those courtesies which facilitate political and personal intercourse, and that spirit of conciliation which, especially in a mixed government chiefly conducted by party, sometimes enables men to win a way which they cannot force towards the attainment of important objects. Perhaps his most unfortunate prejudices were those which he had early imbibed upon certain matters of Ecclesiastical Polity, and which the accidental circumstance of his connexion with Oxford as Chancellor strengthened to the exclusion of the reforming spirit carried by him into all institutions of a merely secular kind. Upon the Parliamentary constitution of the country he had no such alarms or scruples; and, although it is certain that he would have reformed it much more gradually than the long delay of the great measure rendered ultimately necessary, it is equally clear that he would have stopped short of no improvement which could be reasonably required, merely because it was a change. For he was in this greatest quality of a statesman pre-eminently distinguished, that, as he neither would yield up his judgment to the clamours of the people, nor suffer himself to be seduced by the influence of the Court, so would he never submit his reason to the empire of prejudice, or own the supremacy of authority and tradition. "Reliqui sunt, qui mortui sunt—L. Torquatus, quem tu non tam cito rhetorem dixisses, etsi non deerat oratio, quam, ut Græci dicunt πολιτικόν. Erant in eo plurimæ litteræ, nec eæ vulgares, sed interiores quædam et reconditæ, divina memoria, summa verborum et gravitas et elegantia: atque hæc omnia vitæ decorabat dignitas et integritas. Plena litteratæ senectutis oratio. Quanta severitas in vultû! Quantum pondus in verbis! Quam nihil non consideratum exibat ex ore! Sileamus de isto, ne augeamus dolorem. Nam et præteritorum recordatio est acerba, et acerbior expectatio reliquorum."*

* Cicero, Brutus, 266.

MR. GRATTAN.

THE name which we mentioned as superior to even Lord Grenville in services to the Irish question, recalls to mind one of the greatest men of his age—Henry Grattan.

It would not be easy to point out any statesman or patriot, in any age of the world, whose fame stands higher for his public services; nor is it possible to name any one, the purity of whose reputation has been stained by so few faults, and the lustre of whose renown is dimmed by so few imperfections. From the earliest years at which he could appear upon the political stage, he devoted himself to state affairs. While yet in the prime of youth, he had achieved a victory which stands at the head of all the triumphs ever won by a patriot for his country in modern times; he had effected an important revolution in the Government, without violence of any kind, and had broken chains of the most degrading kind, by which the injustice and usurpation of three centuries had bound her down. Her immediate gratitude placed him in a situation of independence, which enabled him to consecrate the remainder of his days to her service, without the interruption arising from professional pursuits; and he continued to persevere in the same course of patriotism marked by a rare union of the moderation which springs from combined wisdom and virtue, with the firmness and the zeal which are peculiar to genius. No factious partisan, making devotion to the public cause a convenient and a safe mask for the attainment of his selfish interests, whether of sordid avarice or of crawling ambition, ever found in Grattan either an instrument or an accomplice. No true friend of the people, inspired with a generous desire of extirpating abuses, and of extending the reign of freedom, ever complained of Grattan's slowness to join the untarnished banner of patriotism. No advocate of human improvement, filled with the sacred zeal of enlarging the enjoyments or elevating the condition of mankind, was ever damped in his aspirations by Grattan's coldness, or had reason to wish him less the advocate of Ireland and more the friend of his species.

The principal battle which he fought for his native country required him to embrace every great and difficult question of domestic policy; for the misrule and oppression exercised by England over the Irish people extended to all their commercial dealings, as well as to their political rights, and sought to fetter their trade by a complicated system of vexatious regulations, as well as to awe their legislators by an assumption of sovereignty, and to impose the fetters of a foreign jurisdiction upon the administration of justice itself. In

no part of this vast and various field were Mr. Grattan's powers found to fail, or his acquirements to prove deficient; and he handled the details of fiscal and of mercantile policy with as much accuracy and as great address as he brought to the discussion of the broader and easier though more momentous subject—the great question of National Independence. He was left, on the achievement of his great triumph, in possession of as brilliant a reputation as man could desire; and it was unsullied by any one act either of factious violence, or of personal meanness, or of the inconsistency into which overmuch vehemence in the pursuit of praiseworthy objects is wont to betray even the most virtuous men. The popular favour which he enjoyed to so unexampled a degree, and in such unmeasured profusion, was in a short time destined to suffer an interruption, not unusual in the history of popular leaders; and for refusing to join in the designs, of a more than doubtful origin, of men inferior in reputation of every kind, and of a more than doubtful honesty—men who proscribed as unworthy of the people's esteem all that acknowledged any restraints of moderation—he lived to see himself denounced by the factious, reviled by the unprincipled, and abandoned by their dupes, the bulk of the very nation whose idol he had so lately been.

The war with France, and the fear of revolutionary movements at home, rendered him for some years an alarmist; and he joined with those who supported the hostilities into which Mr. Pitt and the Portland seceders from the Whig party unhappily plunged the empire. But he carried his support of arbitrary measures at home a very short way, compared with the new allies of the Government in England; and the proceedings of the Irish Ministry, during and after the Rebellion, found in him an adversary as uncompromising as in the days of his most strenuous patriotism, and most dazzling popularity. Despairing of success by any efforts of the party in Parliament, he joined in the measure of secession adopted by the English Whigs, but after a manner far more reconcilable to a sense of public duty, as well as far more effective in itself, than the absurd and inconsistent course which they pursued, of retaining the office of representatives, while they refused to perform any of its duties, except the enjoyment of its personal privileges. Mr. Grattan and the leaders of the Irish opposition vacated their seats at once, and left their constituents to choose other delegates. When the Union was propounded, they again returned to their posts, and offered a resistance to that measure, which at first proved successful, and deferred for a year the accomplishment of a measure planned in true wisdom, though executed by most corrupt and corrupting means—a measure as necessary for the well-being of Ireland as for the security of the empire at large. He entered the Imperial Parliament in 1805, and continued, with the exception of the question upon the renewal of

the war in 1815, a constant and most powerful coadjutor of the Whig party, refusing office when they came into power upon Mr. Pitt's death, but lending them a strenuous support upon all great questions, whether of English policy or of Irish, and showing himself most conspicuously above the mean and narrow spirit that would confine a statesman's exertions to the questions which interest one portion of the empire, or with which his own fame in former times may have been more peculiarly entwined.

Among the orators, as among the statesmen of his age, Mr. Grattan occupies a place in the foremost rank; and it was the age of the Pitts, the Foxes, and the Sheridans. His eloquence was of a very high order, all but of the very highest, and it was eminently original. In the constant stream of a diction replete with epigram and point—a stream on which floated gracefully, because naturally, flowers of various hues,—was poured forth the closest reasoning, the most luminous statement, the most persuasive display of all the motives that could influence, and of all the details that could enlighten, his audience. Often a different strain was heard, and it was declamatory and vehement—or pity was to be moved, and its pathos was touching as it was simple—or, above all, an adversary sunk in baseness, or covered with crimes, was to be punished or to be destroyed, and a storm of the most terrible invective raged, with all the blights of sarcasm, and the thunders of abuse. The critic, led away for the moment, and unable to do more than feel with the audience, could in those cases, even when he came to reflect and to judge, find often nothing to reprehend; seldom in any case more than the excess of epigram, which had yet become so natural to the orator, that his argument and his narrative, and even his sagacious unfolding of principles, seemed spontaneously to clothe themselves in the most pointed terseness, and most apt and felicitous antitheses. From the faults of his country's eloquence he was, generally speaking, free. Occasionally an over fondness for vehement expression, an exaggeration of passion, or an offensive appeal to Heaven, might be noted; very rarely a loaded use of figures, and, more rarely still, of figures broken and mixed. But the perpetual striving after far-fetched quaintness; the disdaining to say any one thing in an easy and natural style; the contempt of that rule, as true in rhetoric as in conduct, that it is wise to do common things in the common way; the affectation of excessive feeling upon all things, without regard to their relative importance; the making any occasion, even the most fitted to rouse genuine and natural feeling, a mere opportunity of theatrical display—all these failings, by which so many oratorical reputations have been blighted among a people famous for their almost universal oratorical genius, were looked for in vain when Mr. Grattan rose, whether in the senate of his native country, or in

that to which he was transferred by the Union. And if he had some peculiarity of outward appearance, as a low and awkward person, in which he resembled the first of orators, and even of manner, in which he had not like him made the defects of nature yield to severe culture; so had he one excellence of the very highest order, in which he may be truly said to have left all the orators of modern times behind—the severe abstinence which rests satisfied with striking the decisive blow in a word or two, not weakening its effect by repetition and expansion,—and another excellence higher still, in which no orator of any age is his equal, the easy and copious flow of most profound, sagacious, and original principles, enunciated in terse and striking, but appropriate language. To give a sample of this latter peculiarity would be less easy, and would occupy more space; but of the former it may be truly said that Dante himself never conjured up a striking, a pathetic, and an appropriate image in fewer words than Mr. Grattan employed to describe his relation towards Irish independence, when, alluding to its rise in 1782, and its fall twenty years later, he said, "I sat by its cradle—I followed its hearse."

In private life he was without a stain, whether of temper or of principle; singularly amiable, as well as of unblemished purity in all the relations of family and of society; of manners as full of generosity as they were free from affectation; of conversation as much seasoned with spirit and impregnated with knowledge as it was void of all asperity and gall. Whoever heard him in private society, and marked the calm tone of his judicious counsel, the profound wisdom of his sagacious observations, the unceasing felicity of his expressions, the constant variety and brilliancy of his illustrations, could well suppose that he had conversed with the orator whose wit and whose wisdom enlightened and guided the senate of his country; but in the playful hilarity of the companion, his unbroken serenity, his unruffled good nature, it would indeed have been a difficult thing to recognise the giant of debate, whose awful energies had been hurled, nor yet exhausted, upon the Corrys, the Duignans, and the Floods.*

The signal failure of the latter, when transplanted to the English Parliament, suggests a reference to the same passage in the life of Mr. Grattan. Men were variously inclined to conjecture upon his

* It is always a matter of difficulty to draw the character of a person who belongs to another, and, in some particulars, a very different country. This has been felt in making the attempt to give a sketch of Mr. Grattan; and whoever has read the most lively and picturesque piece of biography that was ever given to the world, Mr. C. Philips' Recollections of Curran, will join in the regret here expressed, that the present work did not fall into hands so able to perform it in a masterly manner. The constant occupation consequent upon great professional eminence, has unfortunately withdrawn him from the walks of literature, in which he was so remarkably fitted to shine.

probable success; and the singularity of his external appearance, and his manner of speaking, as well as his action, so unusual in the English Parliament, made the event doubtful, for some time, during his speech of 1805. Nor were there wanting those surrounding Mr. Pitt who foretold "that it would not do." That great debater and experienced judge is said to have for some moments partaken of these doubts, when the happy execution of some passage, not perhaps marked by the audience at large, at once dispelled them; and he pronounced to his neighbours an authoritative and decisive sentence, which the unanimous voice of the House and of the country forthwith affirmed.

This illustrious patriot died a few days after his arrival in London, at the beginning of June, 1820, having come with the greatest difficulty, and in a dying state, to attend his Parliamentary duties. A request was made to his family, that his remains might be buried in Westminster Abbey, instead of being conveyed for interment to Ireland; and this having been complied with, the obsequies were attended by all the more distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament. The following Letter containing the request was signed by the leaders of the liberal party. The beauty of its chaste composition was much and justly admired at the time; but little wonder was excited by it, when the author came to be known. It proceeded from the pen of one of the greatest poets whom this country has produced, as well as one of its finest prose writers; who to this unstable fame adds the more imperishable renown of being also one of the most honourable men, and most uncompromising friends of civil and religious liberty, who have appeared in any age. The rare felicity of our times, in possessing two individuals to whom this description might be applied, —Rogers and Campbell,—alone makes it necessary to add that the former is here meant.

"TO THE SONS OF MR. GRATTAN.

"Filled with veneration for the character of your father, we venture to express a wish, common to us with many of those who most admired and loved him, that what remains of him should be allowed to continue among us.

"It has pleased Divine Providence to deprive the empire of his services, while he was here in the neighbourhood of that sacred edifice where great men from all parts of the British dominions have been for ages interred. We are desirous of an opportunity of joining in the due honours to tried virtue and genius. Mr. Grattan belongs to us also, and great would be our consolation were we permitted to follow him to the grave, and to place him where he would not have been unwilling to lie—by the side of his illustrious fellow-labourers in the cause of freedom."

MR. WILBERFORCE.

Contemporary with Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt, whose intimate friend he was, and whose partisan for a time, appeared a man, in some respects more illustrious than either—one who, among the greatest benefactors of the human race, holds an exalted station—one whose genius was elevated by his virtues, and exalted by his piety. It is, unfortunately, hardly necessary to name one whom the vices and the follies of the age have already particularised, by making it impossible that what has been said could apply to any but Wilberforce.

Few persons have ever either reached a higher and more enviable place in the esteem of their fellow creatures, or have better deserved the place they had gained, than William Wilberforce. He was naturally a person of great quickness and even subtilty of mind, with a lively imagination, approaching to playfulness of fancy; and hence he had wit in an unmeasured abundance, and in all its varieties; for he was endowed with an exquisite sense of the ludicrous in character, the foundation of humour, as well as with the perception of remote resemblances, the essence of wit. These qualities, however, he had so far disciplined his faculties as to keep in habitual restraint, lest he should ever offend against strict decorum, by introducing light matter into serious discussion, or be betrayed into personal remarks too poignant for the feelings of individuals. For his nature was mild and amiable beyond that of most men; fearful of giving the least pain in any quarter, even while heated with the zeal of controversy on questions that roused all his passions; and more anxious, if it were possible, to gain over rather than to overpower an adversary and disarm him by kindness, or the force of reason, or awakening appeals to his feelings, rather than defeat him by hostile attack. His natural talents were cultivated, and his taste refined by all the resources of a complete Cambridge education, in which, while the classics were sedulously studied, the mathematics were not neglected; and he enjoyed in the society of his intimate friends, Mr. Pitt and Dean Milner, the additional benefit of foreign travel, having passed nearly a year in France, after the dissolution of Lord Shelburne's administration had removed Mr. Pitt from office. Having entered parliament as member for Hull, where his family were the principal commercial men of the place, he soon afterwards, upon the ill-fated coalition destroying all confidence in the Whig party, succeeded Mr. Foljambe as member for Yorkshire, which he continued to represent as long as his health permitted him, having only retired to a less la-

borious seat in the year 1812. Although generally attached to the Pitt ministry, he pursued his course wholly unfettered by party connexion, steadily refused all office through his whole life, nor would lay himself under any obligations by accepting a share of patronage; and he differed with his illustrious friend upon the two most critical emergencies of his life, the question of peace with France in 1795, and the impeachment of Lord Melville ten years later.

His eloquence was of the highest order. It was persuasive and pathetic in an eminent degree; but it was occasionally bold and impassioned, animated with the inspiration which deep feeling alone can breathe into spoken thought, chastened by a pure taste, varied by extensive information, enriched by classical allusion, sometimes elevated by the more sublime topics of holy writ—the thoughts and the spirit

"That touched Isaiah's hallow'd lips with fire."

Few passages can be cited in the oratory of modern times of a more electrical effect than the singularly felicitous and striking allusion to Mr. Pitt's resisting the torrent of Jacobin principles:—"He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed." The singular kindness, the extreme gentleness of his disposition, wholly free from gall, from vanity, or any selfish feeling, kept him from indulging in any of the vituperative branches of rhetoric; but a memorable instance showed that it was anything rather than the want of power which held him off from the use of the weapons so often in almost all other men's hands. When a well-known popular member thought fit to designate him repeatedly, and very irregularly, as the "*Honourable and religious gentleman*," not because he was ashamed of the Cross he gloried in, but because he felt indignant at any one in the British senate deeming piety a matter of imputation, he poured out a strain of sarcasm which none who heard it can ever forget. A common friend of the parties having remarked to Sir Samuel Romilly, beside whom he sat, that this greatly outmatched Pitt himself, the great master of sarcasm, the reply of that great man and just observer was worthy to be remarked, —"Yes," said he, "it is the most striking thing I almost ever heard, but I look upon it as a more singular proof of Wilberforce's virtue than of his genius, for who but he ever was possessed of such a formidable weapon, and never used it?"

Against all these accomplishments of a finished orator there was little to set on the other side. A feeble constitution, which made him say, all his life, that he never was either well or ill; a voice sweetly musical beyond that of most men, and of great compass also, but sometimes degenerating into a whine; a figure exceedingly undignified and ungraceful, though the features of the face were singu-

larly expressive; and a want of condensation, in the latter years of his life, especially, lapsing into digression, and ill calculated for a very business-like audience like the House of Commons—these may be noted as the only drawbacks which kept him out of the very first place among the first speakers of his age, whom, in pathos, and also in graceful and easy and perfectly elegant diction, as well as harmonious periods, he unquestionably excelled. The influence which the Member for Yorkshire always commanded in the old Parliament—the great weight which the head, indeed, the founder, of a powerful religious sect, possessed in the country—would have given extraordinary authority in the senate to one of far inferior personal endowments. But when these partly accidental circumstances were added to his powers, and the whole were used and applied with the habits of industry which naturally belonged to one of his extreme temperance in every respect, it is difficult to imagine any one bringing a greater force to the aid of any cause which he might espouse.

Wherefore, when he stood forward as the leader of the Abolition, vowed implacable war against Slavery and the Slave Trade, and consecrated his life to the accomplishment of its destruction, there was every advantage conferred upon this great cause, and the rather that he held himself aloof from party connexion. A few personal friends, united with him by similarity of religious opinions, might be said to form a small party, and they generally acted in concert, especially in all matters relating to the Slave question. Of these, Henry Thornton was the most eminent in every respect. He was a man of strong understanding, great powers of reasoning and of investigation, an accurate and a curious observer, but who neither had cultivated oratory at all, nor had received a refined education, nor had extended his reading beyond the subjects connected with moral, political, and theological learning. The trade of a banker, which he followed, engrossed much of his time; and his exertions, both in Parliament and through the press, were chiefly confined to the celebrated controversy upon the currency, in which his well-known work led the way, and to a bill for restricting the Slave Trade to part of the African coast, which he introduced when the Abolitionists were wearied out with their repeated failures, and had well-nigh abandoned all hopes of carrying the great measure itself. That measure was fated to undergo much vexatious delay, nor is there any great question of justice and policy, the history of which is less creditable to the British Parliament, or, indeed, to some of the statesmen of this country, although upon it mainly rests the fame of others.

When Mr. Wilberforce, following in Mr. Clarkson's track, had, with matchless powers of eloquence, sustained by a body of the clearest evidence, unveiled all the horrors of a traffic, which, had it

been attended with neither fraud nor cruelty of any kind, was, confessedly, from beginning to end, not a commerce, but a crime, he was defeated by large majorities, year after year. When, at length, for the first time, in 1804, he carried the Abolition Bill through the Commons, the Lords immediately threw it out; and the next year it was again lost in the Commons. All this happened while the opinion of the country was, with the single exception of persons having West India connexions, unanimous in favour of the measure. At different times there was the strongest and most general expression of public feeling upon the subject, and it was a question upon which no two men, endowed with reason, could possibly differ, because, admitting whatever could be alleged about the profits of the traffic, it was not denied that the gain proceeded from pillage and murder. Add to all this, that the enormous evil continued to disgrace the country and its legislature for twenty years, although the voice of every statesman of any eminence, Mr. Windham alone excepted, was strenously lifted against it,—although, upon this only question, Pitt, Fox, and Burke heartily agreed,—although by far the finest of all Mr. Pitt's speeches were those which he pronounced against it,—and although every press and every pulpit in the island habitually cried it down. How are we, then, to account for the extreme tenacity of life which the hateful reptile showed? How to explain the fact that all those powerful hands fell paralysed and could not bring it to death? If little honour redounds to the Parliament from this passage in our history, and if it is thus plainly shown that the unreformed House of Commons but ill represented the country; it must also be confessed that Mr. Pitt's conduct gains as little glory from the retrospect. How could he, who never suffered any of his coadjutors, much less his underlings in office, to thwart his will even in trivial matters—he who would have cleared any of the departments of half their occupants, had they presumed to have an opinion of their own upon a single item of any budget, or an article in the year's estimates—how could he, after shaking the walls of the Senate with the thunders of his majestic eloquence, exerted with a zeal which set at defiance all suspicions of his entire sincerity, quietly suffer, that the object, just before declared the dearest to his heart, should be ravished from him when within his sight, nay, within his reach, by the votes of the secretaries and under-secretaries, the puisne lords and the other fry of mere placemen,—the pawns of his boards? It is a question often anxiously put by the friends of the Abolition, never satisfactorily answered by those of the Minister; and if any additional comment were wanting on the darkest passage of his life, it is supplied by the ease with which he cut off the slave traffic of the conquered colonies, an importation of thirty thousand yearly, which he had so

long suffered to exist, though an order in Council could any day have extinguished it. This he never thought of till 1805, and then, of course, the instant he chose, he destroyed it for ever with a stroke of his pen. Again, when the Whigs were in power, they found the total abolition of the traffic so easy, that the measure in pursuing which Mr. Pitt had for so many long years allowed himself to be baffled, was carried by them with only sixteen dissentient voices in a house of 250 members. There can then, unhappily, be but one answer to the question regarding Mr. Pitt's conduct on this great measure. He was, no doubt, quite sincere, but he was not so zealous as to risk anything, to sacrifice anything, or even to give himself any extraordinary trouble for the accomplishment of his purpose. The Court was decidedly against abolition; George III. always regarded the question with abhorrence, as savouring of innovation,—and innovation in a part of his empire, connected with his earliest and most rooted prejudices,—the Colonies. The courtiers took, as is their wont, the colour of their sentiments from him. The Peers were of the same opinion. Mr. Pitt had not the enthusiasm for right and justice, to risk in their behalf losing the friendship of the mammon of unrighteousness, and he left to his rivals, when they became his successors, the glory of that triumph in the sacred cause of humanity, which should have illustrated his name, who in its defence had raised all the strains of his eloquence to their very highest pitch.

MR. CANNING.

When Mr. Pitt stood against the united powers of the coalition by the support of the country and the people, in debate he had only Mr. Dundas, and occasionally Mr. Wilberforce, to whom he could look for assistance while attacked by Fox, Burke, North, Sheridan, Erskine, Windham. But a younger race afterwards grew up and came to his assistance; and of these Mr. Canning was undoubtedly the first. He was, in all respects, one of the most remarkable persons who have lived in our times. Born with talents of the highest order, these had been cultivated with an assiduity and success which placed him in the first rank among the most accomplished scholars of his day; and he was only inferior to others in the walks of science, from the accident of the studies which Oxford cherished in his time being pointed almost exclusively to classical pursuits. But he was anything rather than a mere scholar. In him were combined, with a rich profusion, the most lively original fancy—a happily retentive

and ready memory—singular powers of lucid statement—and occasionally wit in all its varieties, now biting and sarcastic to overwhelm an antagonist—now pungent or giving point to an argument—now playful for mere amusement, and bringing relief to a tedious statement, or lending a charm to dry chains of close reasoning—Erant ea in Philippo quæ, qui sine comparatione illorum spectaret, satis magna dixerit; summa libertas in oratione, multæ facetiæ; satis creber in reprehendendis, solutus in explicandis sententiis; erat etiam imprimis, ut temporibus illis, Græcis doctrinis institutus, in altercando cum aliquo acculeo et maledicto facetus.—(Cic., *Brutus*.) Superficial observers dazzled by this brilliancy, and by its sometimes being over-indulged, committed their accustomed mistake, and supposed that he who could thus adorn his subject was an amusing speaker only, while he was helping on the argument at every step,—often making skilful statements perform the office of reasoning, and oftener still seeming to be witty when he was merely exposing the weakness of hostile positions, and thus taking them by the artillery of his wit. But in truth his powers of ordinary reasoning were of a very high order, and could not be excelled by the most practised master of dialectics. It was rather in the deep and full measure of impassioned declamation in its legitimate combination with rapid argument, the highest reach of oratory, that he failed; and this he rarely attempted. Of his powers of argumentation, his capacity for the pursuits of abstract science, his genius for adorning the least attractive subjects, there remains an imperishable record in his celebrated speeches upon the "Currency," of all his efforts the most brilliant and the most happy.

This great man was the slave of no mean or paltry passions, but a lofty ambition inspired him; and had he not too early become trained to official habits, he would have avoided the distinguishing error of his life, an impression which clung to him from the desk, that no one can usefully serve his country, or effectually further his principles, unless he possesses the power which place alone bestows. The traces of this belief are to be seen in many of the most remarkable passages of his life; and it even appears in the song with which he celebrated the praise of his illustrious leader and friend; for he treats as a fall his sacrificing power to principle, at a time when by retiring from office Mr. Pitt had earned the applause of millions. Mr. Canning himself gave an example yet more signal of abandoning office rather than tarnish his fame; and no act of his life can be cited which sheds a greater lustre on his memory.

In private society he was singularly amiable and attractive, though, except for a very few years of his early youth, he rarely frequented the circles of society, confining his intercourse to an ex-

tremely small number of warmly attached friends.* In all the relations of domestic life he was blameless, and was the delight of his family, as in them he placed his own.† His temper, though naturally irritable and uneasy, had nothing petty or spiteful in it; and as no one better knew how and when to resent an injury, so none could more readily or more gracefully forgive.

It is supposed that, from his early acquaintance with Mr. Sheridan and one or two other Whigs, he originally had a leaning towards that side of the question. But he entered into public life at a very early age, under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, to whom he continued steadily attached till his death; accompanying him when he retired from power, and again quitting office upon his decease. His principles were throughout those of a liberal Tory, above the prejudices of the bigots who have rendered Toryism ridiculous, and free from the corruption that has made it hateful. Imbued with a warm attachment to the ancient institutions of the country, somewhat apt to overrate the merits of mere antiquity, from his classical habits, and from early association, he nevertheless partook largely in the improved spirit of the age, and adopted all reforms, except such as he conscientiously believed were only dictated by a restless love of change, and could do no good, or such as went too far, and threatened revolution. But this was the posture into which his opinions and principles may be said ultimately to have subsided—these the bearings of his mind towards the great objects of political controversy in the station which it finally took when the tempest of French convulsion had ceased, and statesmen were moored in still water. He began his career in the most troublous period of the storm; and it happened to him, as to all men, that the tone of his sentiments upon state affairs was very much influenced through after times by the events which first awakened his ambition, or directed his earliest pursuit of glory. The atrocities of the French Jacobins—the thoughtless violence of the extreme democratic party in this country, reduced by those atrocities to a small body—the spirit of aggression

* It is necessary to state this undoubted fact, that the folly of those may be rebuked, who have chosen to represent him as "a great diner-out." It may be safely affirmed that none of those historians of the day ever once saw him at table.

† It is well known how much more attachment was conceived for his memory by his family and his devoted personal friends, than by his most stanch political adherents. The friendships of statesmen are proverbially of rotten texture; but it is doubtful if ever this rottenness was displayed in a more disgusting manner than when the puny men of whose nostrils he had been the breath, joined his worst enemies as soon as they had laid him in the grave. It was said by one hardly ever related to him but in open hostility, that "the gallantry of his kindred had rescued his memory from the offices of his friends,"—in allusion to Lord Clanricarde's most powerful and touching appeal on that disgraceful occasion.

which the conduct of her neighbours had first roused in France, and which unexampled victories soon raised to a pitch that endangered all national independence—led Mr. Canning, with many others who naturally were friendly to liberty, into a course of hostility towards all change, because they became accustomed to confound reform with revolution, and to dread nothing so much as the mischiefs which popular violence had produced in France, and with which the march of French conquests threatened to desolate Europe. Thus it came to pass that the most vigorous and the most active portion of his life was passed in opposing all reforms; in patronising the measures of coercion into which Mr. Pitt had, so unhappily for his fame and for his country, been seduced by the alarms of weak, and by the selfish schemes of unprincipled men; and in resisting the attempts which the friends of peace persevered to make for terminating hostilities, so long the curse, and still by their fruits the bane of this empire.

It was not till the end of the war that his natural good sense had its free scope, and he became aware of the difference between Reforms, of which he admitted the necessity, and Revolution, against all risk of which he anxiously guarded. He had early joined Mr. Pitt on the Catholic question, and, while yet the war raged, he had rendered incalculable service to the cause of Emancipation, by devoting to it some of his most brilliant displays in the House of Commons. This, with the accident of a contested election in a great town bringing him more in contact with popular feelings and opinions, contributed to the liberal course of policy on almost all subjects, which he afterwards pursued. Upon one only question he continued firm and unbending; he was the most uncompromising adversary of all Parliamentary Reform,—resisting even the least change in the representative system, and holding that alteration once begun was fatal to its integrity.* This opposition to reform became the main characteristic of the Canning party, and it regulated their conduct on almost all questions. Before 1831, no exception can be perceived in their hostility to reform, unless their differing with the Duke of Wellington on East Retford can be regarded as such; but, in truth, their avowed reason for supporting that most insignificant measure was, that the danger of a real and effectual reform might thereby be warned off. The friends of Mr. Canning, including Lords Palmerston and Glenelg, who, in 1818, had been joined by Lord

* During the short period of his brilliant administration, the question of disfranchising a burgh, convicted of gross corruption, gave rise to the only difference between him and Mr. Brougham, who was understood to have mainly contributed towards that junction of the Whigs and liberal Tories which dissolved and scattered the old and high Tory party; and a division took place in which Mr. Canning was defeated.

Melbourne,* continued steady to the same principles, until happily, on the formation of Lord Grey's government, they entirely changed their course, and became the advocates, with their reforming colleagues, of a change, compared to which the greatest reforms ever contemplated by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, or denounced by Mr. Burke and Mr. Canning, hardly deserve to be classed among measures of innovation. No one can pronounce with perfect confidence on the conduct which any statesman would have pursued, had he survived the times in which he flourished. But if such an opinion may ever with safety be formed, it seems to be in the present case; and it would require far more boldness to surmise that Mr. Canning, or even Mr. Huskisson, would have continued in the government after the 1st of March, 1831, than to affirm that nothing could ever have induced such an alteration in their most fixed opinions upon so momentous a question.

But while such was the strength of his opinions—prejudices as they seem,—on one great subject, on almost all other matters, whether of foreign or domestic policy, his views were liberal, and suited to the spirit of the age, while he was a firm supporter of the established constitution of the country. If ever man was made for the service and the salvation of a party, Mr. Canning seemed to have been raised up for that of the Tories: if ever party committed a fatal error, it was their suffering groundless distrust, and unintelligible dislikes to estrange him from their side. At a time when nothing but his powerful arm could recall unity to their camp, and save them from impending destruction, they not merely wilfully kindled the wrath of Achilles, but resolved that he should no longer fight on their side, and determined to throw away their last chance of winning the battle. To him they by general assent preferred Lord Castlereagh as their leader, without a single shining quality except the carriage and the manners of high birth: while Mr. Canning, but for his accidental death, would have ended his life as governor of a country where men neither debate, nor write; where eloquence evaporates in scores of paragraphs, and the sparkling of wit and the cadence of rhyme are alike unknown.

The defects of Mr. Canning's character or of his genius were not many, nor those difficult to discover. His irritable temper has been noted; he had a love of trifling and a fondness for indulging in pleasantry, more injurious to his estimation with ordinary men than his temper. Nothing could be more natural than that one who so much excelled others in these lighter, more brilliant, but hardly attainable

* Lord Melbourne differed with the rest of the Canning party on this point. He always opposed Reform, but held that if any was to be granted, it must be in an ample measure; and he did not vote with them, but with the government, on the Reform question, although he resigned with them upon that occasion.

qualities, should be prone to exercise them over-much; but they greatly marred the effect of his more solid and important talents. Above all, they enlarged the circle of his enemies, and occasionally transferred to it the friends whom they lost him. With the common run of ordinary mortals, who compose the mass of every country—with the plainer sort of men who form the bulk of every audience, and who especially bear sway in their own appointed place, the assembly that represents the English people,—it would have been contrary to nature if one so lively, so fond of his joke, so careless whom his merriment might offend, so ready to turn the general laugh against any victim,—had been popular, nay, had failed to prove the object of suspicion, and even dislike. The duller portion, over whose heads his lighter missiles flew, were offended with one who spoke so lightly; it was almost personal to them if he jested, and a classical allusion was next thing to an affront. "He will be laughing at the quorum or talking metaphysics next," said the squire, representing a county. But even they who emulated him and favoured his claims, did not much like the man who had made them so merry, for they felt what it was that they laughed at, and it might be their own turn to-morrow.

That his oratory suffered materially from this self-indulgent habit, so hard to resist by him who possesses the faculty of amusing his audience, and can scarcely pause at the moment that he is exerting it successfully, it would be incorrect to affirm. The graver parts of his discourse were perfectly sustained; they were unmixed with ribaldry; they were quite as powerful in themselves as if they had stood out from the inferior matter and had not soared above it. There is no doubt, however, that with an unreflecting audience, their effect was somewhat confused by the cross lights which the wit, sometimes bordering upon drollery, shot over the canvass. But his declamation, though often powerful, always beautifully ornate, never deficient in admirable diction, was certainly not of the very highest class. It wanted depth: it came from the mouth, not from the heart; and it tickled or even filled the ear rather than penetrated the bosom of the listener. The orator never seemed to forget himself and be absorbed in his theme; he was not carried away by his passions, and he carried not his audience along with him. An actor stood before us, a first-rate one no doubt, but still an actor; and we never forgot that it was a representation we were witnessing, not a real scene. The Grecian artist was of the second class only, at whose fruit the *birds* pecked; while, on seeing Pharrasius' picture, *men* cried out to draw aside the curtain. Mr. Canning's declamation entertained his hearers, so artistly was it executed; but only an inexperienced critic could mistake it for the highest reach of the rhetorical art. The truly great orator is he who carries away his

hearer, or fixes his whole attention on the subject—with the subject fills his whole soul—than the subject, will suffer him to think of no other thing—of the subject's existence alone will let him be conscious, while the vehement inspiration lasts on his own mind which he communicates to his hearer—and will only suffer him to reflect on the admirable execution of what he has heard after the burst is over, the whirlwind has passed away, and the excited feelings have in the succeeding lull sunk into repose.

The vice of this statesman's public principles was much more pernicious in its influence upon his public conduct than the defects which we have just remarked were upon his oratory. Bred up in office from his early years, he had become so much accustomed to its pleasures that he felt uneasy when they were taken from him. It was in him nothing like a sordid propensity that produced this frame of mind. For emolument, he felt the most entire indifference; upon the management of petty intrigue which is called jobbing, he looked down with sovereign contempt. But his extraordinary active mind, impatient of rest, was only to be allayed by occupation, and office afforded this at all hours, and in boundless measure. His kind and friendly nature, attaching him strongly to his associates, as it strongly fixed their affections upon him, made him feel uneasy at their exclusion from power, and desirous to possess the means of gratifying them. Above all, though a great debater, and breathing the air of Parliament as the natural element of his being, he yet was a man of action too, and would sway the counsels as well as shake the senates of his country. He loved debate for its exercise of his great faculties; he loved power for its own sake, caring far less for display than for gratification. Hence, when he retired from office upon the dispute with Lord Castlereagh (a passage of his life much and unjustly blamed at the time, but which had it been ever so exactly as most men then viewed it, has in later times been cast into the thickest shades of oblivion by acts infinitely more abominable and disgraceful), and when he found that instead of a speedy return to power he was condemned to years of exclusion, his impatience led him to the imprudent step of serving under his successful rival on a foreign mission of an unimportant cast. The uneasiness which he manifestly suffered in retirement, even made him consent to the scheme of more permanent expatriation,* which only the unhappy death of Lord Castlereagh prevented from taking effect. But these were rather matters affecting the person than perverting the principles, or misguiding the conduct of the party. The unfortunate love of power, carried too far, and felt so as to make the gratification of it essential to existence, is ruinous to the character of a statesman.

* As Governor-General of India.

It leads often to abandonment of principle, constantly to compromise; it subjects him to frequent dependence; it lowers the tone of his mind, and teaches his spirit to feed on the bitter bread of other's bounty; above all, it occasionally severs him from his natural friends, and brings him acquainted with strange and low associates, whose natures, as their habits, are fit to be scorned by him, and who have with him but one thing in common, that they seek the same object with himself—they for love of gain, he for lust of dominion.

> Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
> Piu caramente, é questo é quello strale
> Che l' arco d' esilio pria saetta,
> Tu proverai come si sa di sale
> Lo pane d' altrui, é come é duro calle
> Lo scendere é il salir altrui scale
> E che il piu ti gravera le spalle
> Sara la compagnia malvagia é scempià
> Che tu vedrai in questa valle! *

Men are apt to devise ingenious excuses for those failings which they cherish most fondly, and if they cannot close their eyes to them, had rather defend than correct. Mr. Canning reasoned himself into a belief which he was wont to profess, that no man can serve his country with effect out of office; as if there were no public in this country; as if there were no Parliament; no forum; no press; as if the Government were in the hands of a Vizier to whom the Turk had given his signet-ring, or a favourite to whom the Czarina had tossed her handkerchief; as if the patriot's vocation had ceased and the voice of public virtue were heard no more; as if the people were without power over their rulers, and only existed to be taxed and to obey! A more pernicious notion never entered the mind of a public man, nor one fitted to undermine his public virtue. It may be made the cloak for every species of flagitious and sordid calculation; and what in him was only a sophistical deception, or a mere illusion of dangerous self-love, might have been, by the common herd of trading politicians, used as the cover for every low, and despicable, and unprincipled artifice. No errors are so dangerous as those false theories of morals which conceal the bounds between right and wrong; enable Vice to trick herself out in the attire of Virtue; and hide our frailties from ourselves by throwing around them the garb of profound wisdom.

Of Mr. Canning it may be justly observed, as of Mr. Fox, that whatever errors he committed on other questions, on the Abolition of the Slave Trade he was undeviatingly true to sound principles and

* Dante, Par.

enlightened policy. Respecting the questions connected with Emancipation, his course was by no means so commendable; but of the Abolitionists he was at once a strenuous and effective ally. It is understood that he deeply lamented the contrast which Mr. Pitt's proceedings on this question presented to his speeches; and he insisted on bringing forward a motion against the policy of capturing colonies to extend the Slave-traffic, when Mr. Pitt was in retirement.

SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY.

How different from Mr. Pitt's conduct was that of Lord Grenville, who no sooner acceded to office in 1806, than he encouraged all the measures which first restrained, and then entirely abolished that infernal traffic! The crown lawyers of his administration were directed to bring in a bill for abolishing the foreign slave-trade of our colonies, as well as all importation into the conquered settlements—and when it is recollected that Sir Samuel Romilly at that time added lustre and gave elevation to the office of solicitor-general, it may well be supposed that those duties were cheerfully and duly followed both by him and his honest, learned, and experienced colleague, Sir Arthur Pigott. It is fit that no occasion on which Sir Samuel Romilly is named should ever be passed over without an attempt to record the virtues and endowments of so great and so good a man, for the instruction of after ages.

Few persons have ever attained celebrity of name and exalted station, in any country, or in any age, with such unsullied purity of character, as this equally eminent and excellent person. His virtue was stern and inflexible, adjusted, indeed, rather to the rigorous standard of ancient morality than to the less ambitious and less elevated maxims of the modern code. But in this he very widely differed from the antique model upon which his character generally appeared to be framed, and also very far surpassed it, that there was nothing either affected or repulsive about him; and if ever a man existed who would more than any other have scorned the pitiful fopperies which disfigured the worth of Cato, or have shrunk from the harsher virtue of Brutus, Romilly was that man. He was, in truth, a person of the most natural and simple manners, and one in whom the kindliest charities and warmest feelings of human nature were blended in the largest measure with that firmness of purpose, and unrelaxed sincerity of principle, in almost all other men found to be little compatible with the attributes of a gentle nature and the feelings of a tender heart.

The observer who gazes upon the character of this great man is naturally struck first of all with its most prominent feature, and that is the rare excellence which we have now marked, so far above every gift of the understanding, and which throws the lustre of mere genius into the shade. But his capacity was of the highest order. An extraordinary reach of thought; great powers of attention and of close reasoning; a memory quick and retentive; a fancy eminently brilliant, but kept in perfect discipline by his judgment and his taste, which was nice, cultivated, and severe, without any of the squeamishness so fatal to vigour—these were the qualities which, under the guidance of the most persevering industry, and with the stimulus of a lofty ambition, rendered him unquestionably the first advocate, and the most profound lawyer, of the age he flourished in; placed him high among the ornaments of the Senate; and would, in all likelihood, have given him the foremost place among them all, had not the occupations of his laborious profession necessarily engrossed a disproportionate share of his attention, and made political pursuits fill a subordinate place in the scheme of his life. *Jurisperitorum disertissimus, disertorum vero jurisperitissimus.* As his practice, so his authority at the bar and with the bench was unexampled; and his success in Parliament was great and progressive. Some of his speeches, both forensic and Parliamentary, are nearly unrivalled in excellence. The reply, even as reported in 11 *Vesey, junior*, in the cause of *Hugonin* v. *Beasley*,* where legal matters chiefly were in question, may give no mean idea of his extraordinary powers. The last speech that he pronounced in the House of Commons, upon a bill respecting the law of naturalization, which gave him occasion to paint the misconduct of the expiring Parliament in severe and even dark colours, was generally regarded as unexampled among the efforts of his eloquence; nor can they who recollect its effects ever cease to lament with tenfold bitterness of sorrow, the catastrophe which terminated his life and extinguished his glory, when they reflect that the vast accession to his influence from being chosen for Westminster, came at a time when his genius had reached its amplest display, and his authority in Parliament, unaided by station, had attained the highest eminence. The friend of public virtue, and the advocate of human improvement, will mourn still more sorrowfully over his urn than the admirers of genius, or those who are dazzled by political triumphs. For no one could know Romilly, and doubt that, as he only valued his own success and his own powers, in the belief that they might conduce to the good of mankind, so each augmentation of his authority, each step of his progress, must have been attended with

* A case very nearly resembling this, *Macabe* v. *Hussey*, was argued in the House of Lords in October, 1831, by Mr. O'Connell, and his argument was a masterpiece, according to the judgment of those who heard it.

some triumph in the cause of humanity and justice. True, he would at length, in the course of nature, have ceased to live; but then the bigot would have ceased to persecute—the despot to vex—the desolate poor to suffer—the slave to groan and tremble—the ignorant to commit crimes—andthe ill-contrived law to engender criminality.

On these things all men are agreed; but if a more distinct account be desired of his eloquence, it must be said that it united all the more severe graces of oratory, both as regards the manner and the substance. No man argued more closely when the understanding was to be addressed; no man declaimed more powerfully when indignation was to be aroused or the feelings moved. His language was choice and pure; his powers of invective resembled rather the grave authority with which the judge puts down a contempt, or punishes an offender, than the attack of an advocate against his adversary and his equal. His imagination was the minister whose services were rarely required, and whose mastery was never for an instant admitted. His sarcasm was tremendous, nor always very sparingly employed. His manner was perfect, in voice, in figure, in a countenance of singular beauty and dignity; nor was anything in his oratory more striking or more effective than the heartfelt sincerity which it throughout displayed, in topic, in diction, in tone, in look, in gesture. "In Scauri oratione sapientis hominis et recti, gravitas summa, et naturalis quædam inerat auctoritas, non ut causam, sed ut testimonium dicere putares. Significabat enim non prudentiam solum, sed, quod maxime rem continebat, fidem."*

Considering his exalted station at the bar, his pure and unsullied character, and the large space which he filled in the eye of the country, men naturally looked for his ascent to the highest station in the profession of which he was, during so many years, the ornament and the pride. Nor could any one question that he would have presented to the world the figure of a consummate judge. He alone felt any doubt upon the extent of his own judicial qualities; and he has recorded in his journal (that invaluable document in which he was wont to set down freely his sentiments on men and things) a modest opinion, expressing his apprehension, should he ever be so tried, that men would say of him "*Capax imperii nisi imperasset.*" With this single exception, offering so rare an instance of impartial self-judgment, and tending of itself to its own refutation, all who had no interest in the elevation of others, have held his exclusion from the supreme place in the law, as one of the heaviest items in the price paid for the factious structure of our practical government.

In his private life and personal habits he exhibited a model for imitation, and an object of unqualified esteem. All his severity was re-

* Cic., *Brutus.*

served for the forum and the senate, when vice was to be lashed, or justice vindicated, the public delinquent exposed, or the national oppressor overawed. In his family and in society, where it was his delight, and the only reward of his unremitting labours, to unbend, he was amiable, simple, natural, cheerful. The vast resources of his memory,—the astonishing economy of time, by which he was enabled to read almost every work of interest that came from the press of either his hereditary or his native country, either France or England,—the perfect correctness of his taste, refined to such a pitch that his pencil was one of no ordinary power, and his verses, when once or twice only he wrote poetry, were of great merit,—his freedom from affectation,—the wisdom of not being above doing ordinary things in the ordinary way,—all conspired to render his society peculiarly attractive, and would have made it courted even had his eminence in higher matters been far less conspicuous. While it was the saying of one political adversary, the most experienced and correct observer * among all the parliamentary men of his time, that he never was out of his place while Romilly spoke without finding that he had cause to lament his absence,—it was the confession of all who were admitted to his private society, that they forgot the lawyer, the orator, and the patriot, and had never been aware, while gazing on him with admiration, how much more he really deserved that tribute than he appeared to do when seen from afar.

If defects are required to be thrown into such a sketch, and are deemed as necessary as the shades in a picture, or, at least, as the more subdued tones of some parts for giving relief to others, this portraiture of Romilly must be content to remain imperfect. For what is there on which to dwell for blame, if it be not a proneness to prejudice in favour of opinions resembling his own, a blindness to the defects of those who held them and a prepossession against those who held them not? While there is so very little to censure, there is unhappily much to deplore. A morbid sensibility embittered many hours of his earlier life, and when deprived of the wife whom he most tenderly and justly loved, contributed to bring on an inflammatory fever, in the paroxysm of which he untimely met his end.

The Letter of Mr. Brougham, on Abuse of Charities, was communicated in manuscript to him while attending the sick bed of that excellent person, whose loss brought on his own. It tended to beguile some of those sorrowful hours, the subject having long deeply engaged his attention; and it was the last thing that he read. His estimate of its merits was exceedingly low; at least he said he was sure no tract had ever been published on a more dry subject, or was likely to excite less attention. The interest of the subject, however, was

* Mr. Charles Long, afterwards Lord Farnborough.

much undervalued by him; for the Letter ran through eight editions in the month of October.*

That he highly approved of the labours of the Education Committee, however, and that the conduct of its Chairman shared fully in his approval, there can be no doubt. In the last will which he made, there is a warm expression of personal regard and a strong testimony to public merits, accompanying a desire that his friend would join with another whom he had long known intimately, and whom he consequently most highly and most justly esteemed, Mr. Whishaw, in performing the office of literary executor. The manuscripts which he left were numerous and important. The most interesting are the beautiful Sketches of his early life, and the Journal to which reference has already been made. But his commentaries upon subjects connected with jurisprudence are those of the greatest value; for they show that most of the reforms of which he maintains the expediency, have since his decease been adopted by the Legislature; and they thus form a powerful reason for adopting those others which he recommends, and which are not now less favoured by the general opinion of mankind, than were the former class at the early period when he wrote. The injunction to his friends contained in his will, was truly characteristic of the man. He particularly desired them, in determining whether or not the manuscripts should be published, only to regard the prospect there was of their being in any degree serviceable to mankind, and by no means to throw away a thought upon any injury which the appearance of such unfinished works might do to his literary character. Whoever knew him, indeed, was well persuaded that in all his exertions his personal gratification never was for a moment consulted, unless as far as whatever he did, or whatever he witnessed in others, had a relish for him exactly proportioned to its tendency towards the establishment of the principles which formed, as it were, a part of his nature, and towards the promotion of human happiness, the grand aim of all his views. This is that colleague and comrade whose irreparable loss his surviving friends have had to deplore, through all their struggles for the good cause in which they had stood by his side; a loss which each succeeding day renders heavier, and harder to bear, when the misconduct of some, and the incapacity of others, so painfully recall the contrast of one whose premature end gave the first and the only pang that had ever come from him; and all his associates may justly exclaim in the words of Tully regarding Hortensius, "Augebat etiam molestiam, quod magnâ sapientium civium bonorumque penu-

* The last book of any importance read by him was Mr. Hallam's first great work, of which he justly formed the highest opinion, and recommended the immediate perusal of it to the author of the Letter, as a contrast to that performance, in respect of the universal interest of the subject.

ria, vir egregius, conjunctissimusque mecum consiliorum omnium societate, alienissimo reipublicæ tempore extinctus, et auctoritatis, et prudentiæ suæ triste nobis desiderium reliquerat: dolebamque, quòd non, ut plerique putabant, adversarium, aut obtrectatorem laudum mearum, sed socium potius et consortem gloriosi laboris amiseram."

And here for a moment let us pause. We have been gazing on the faint likenesses of many great men. We have been traversing a Gallery, on either side of which they stand ranged. We have made bold in that edifice to "expatiate and confer the State affairs" of their age. Cognizant of its history, aware of the principles by which the English chiefs are marshalled, sagacious of the springs that move the politic wheel whose revolutions we contemplate, it is an easy thing for us to comprehend the phenomenon most remarkably presented by those figures and their arrangement; nor are we led to stare aghast at that which would astound any mind not previously furnished with the ready solution to make all plain and intelligible. But suppose some one from another hemisphere, or another world, admitted to the spectacle which we find so familiar, and consider what would be its first effect upon his mind.—"Here," he would say, "stand the choicest spirits of their age; the greatest wits, the noblest orators, the wisest politicians, the most illustrious patriots. Here they stand, whose magical eloquence has shook the spheres, whose genius has poured out strains worthy the inspiration of the gods, whose lives were devoted to the purity of their principles, whose memories were bequeathed to a race graceful for benefits received from their sufferings and their sacrifices. Here stand all these "lights of the world and demigods of fame;" but here they stand not ranged on one side of this Gallery, having served a common country! With the same bright object in their view, their efforts were divided, not united; they fiercely combated each other, and not together assailed some common foe; their great exertions were bestowed, their more than mortal forces were expended, not in furthering the general good, not in resisting their country's enemies, but in conflicts among themselves; and all their triumphs were won over each other, and all their sufferings were endured at each other's hands!"—"Is it," the unenlightened stranger would add, "a reality that I survey, or a troubled vision that mocks my sight? Am I indeed contemplating the prime of men amongst a rational people, or the Coryphei of a band of mimes? Or, haply, am I admitted to survey the cells of some hospital appointed for the insane; or is it, peradventure, the vaults of some pandemonium through which my eyes have been suffered to wander till my vision aches, and my brain is disturbed?"

Thus far the untutored native of some far-distant wild on earth, or the yet more ignorant inhabitant of some world, remote "beyond the solar walk or Milky Way." We know more; we apprehend things better. But let us, even in our pride of enlightened wisdom, pause for a moment to reflect on this most anomalous state of things,—this arrangement of political affairs which systematically excludes at least one half of the great men of each age from their country's service, and devotes both classes infinitely more to maintaining a conflict with one another than to furthering the general good. And here it may be admitted at once that nothing can be less correct than their view, who regard the administration of affairs as practically in

the hands of only one-half the nation, whilst the excluded portion is solely occupied in thwarting their proceedings. The influence of both Parties is exerted, and the movement of the state machine partakes of both the forces impressed upon it; neither taking the direction of the one nor of the other, but a third line between both. This concession, no doubt, greatly lessens the evil; but it is very far indeed from removing it. Why must there always be this exclusion, and this conflict? Does not every one immediately perceive how it must prove detrimental to the public service in the great majority of instances; and how miserable a make-shift for something better and more rational it is, even where it does more good than harm? Besides, if it requires a constant and systematic opposition to prevent mischief, and keep the machine of state in the right path, of what use is our boasted representative government, which is designed to give the people a control over their rulers, and serves no other purpose at all? Let us for a moment consider the origin of this system of Party, that we may the better be able to appreciate its value and to comprehend its manner of working.

The Origin of Party may be traced by fond theorists and sanguine votaries of the system, to a radical difference of opinions and principle; to the "*idem sentire de republicâ*" which has at all times marshalled men in combinations or split them in oppositions; but it is pretty plain to any person of ordinary understanding, that a far less romantic ground of union and of separation has for the most part existed—the individual interests of the parties; the *idem velle atque idem nolle;* the desire of power and of plunder, which, as all cannot share, each is desirous of snatching and holding. The history of English party is as certainly that of a few great men and powerful families on the one hand, contending for place and power, with a few others on the opposite quarter, as it is the history of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts. There is nothing more untrue than to represent principle as at the bottom of it; interest is at the bottom, and the opposition of principle is subservient to the opposition of interest. Accordingly, the result has been, that unless perhaps where a dynasty was changed, as in 1688, and for some time afterwards, and excepting on questions connected with this change, the very same conduct was held and the same principles professed by both Parties when in office and by both when in opposition. Of this we have seen sufficiently remarkable instances in the course of the foregoing pages. The Whig in opposition was for retrenchment and for peace; transplant him into office, he cared little for either. Bills of coercion, suspensions of the constitution, were his abhorrence when propounded by Tories; in place, he propounded them himself. Acts of indemnity and of attainder were the favourites of the Tory in power; the Tory in opposition was the enemy of both. The gravest charge ever brought by the Whig against his adversary was the personal proscription of an exalted individual to please a King; the worst charge that the Tory can level against the Whig is the support of a proscription still less justifiable to please a Viceroy.

It cannot surely in these circumstances be deemed extraordinary that plain men, uninitiated in the Aristocratic Mysteries whereof a rigid devotion to Party forms one of the most sacred, should be apt to see a very different connexion between principle and faction from the one usually put forward; and that without at all denying a relation between the two things, they should reverse the account generally given by Party men, and suspect them of taking up principles in order to marshal themselves in alliances and hostilities for their own interests, instead of engaging in those contests because of their conflicting principles. In a word, there

seems some reason to suppose that interest having really divided them into bands, principles are professed for the purpose of better compassing their objects by maintaining a character and gaining the support of the people.

That to a certain degree this is true, we think can hardly be doubted, although it is also impossible to deny that there is a plain line of distinction between the two great Parties which formerly prevailed in this country upon one important point, the foundations and extent of the Royal Prerogative. But that this line can now be traced it would be absurd to pretend. Mr. Pitt, and even Lord North, had no other opinions respecting kingly power than Mr. Fox or Mr. Burke; and the rival theories of Sir Robert Filmer and Mr. Locke were as obsolete during the American war as they are at this day. Then have not men, since Jacobitism and Divine Right were exploded, generally adopted opinions upon the practical questions of the day in such a manner as to let them conveniently co-operate with certain acts of statesmen and oppose others; join some family interests together in order to counterbalance some other family interests; league themselves in bodies to keep or to get power in opposition to other bands formed with a similar view? This surely will not, upon a calm review of the facts, be denied by any one whose judgment is worth having.

Observe how plainly the course pursued by one class dictates that to be taken by the other. There must be combinations, and there must be oppositions; and therefore things to differ upon, as well as things to agree upon, must needs be found. Thus, the King is as hostile as bigotry and tyranny can make him to American liberty, and his ministers support him in the war to crush it. This throws the opposition upon the liberal side of the question, without which they can neither keep together nor continue to resist the ministry. Is any man so blind as seriously to believe that, had Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox been the Ministers of George III. they would have resigned rather than try to put down the Americans? If so, let him open his eyes, and ask himself another simple question, What Minister would ever volunteer his advice to dismember the empire? But if that fails to convince him, let him recollect that the American war had raged for years before the word "Separation" crossed the lips of any man in either House of Parliament—all the attacks were made upon the ill-treatment of our fellow-subjects, and the mismanagement of the war; the Whigs would have been more kind rulers and better generals, but only in order to prevent the last of calamities—Separation and Independence. Nay, the same Party being now in power, have avowed towards Canada the very principles upon which Lord North carried on the former contest. The Tories may perhaps allege that they have of late been more consistent.

Take another instance. While the Whigs were out of office, the same King's bigotry refused to emancipate the Roman Catholics. It would be a strong thing to hold, that the Party which was always distinguished for its hatred of Romanism, and which had founded its power of old on the penal laws, must of necessity have taken an opposite view of this question because circumstances had changed and those laws had become unnecessary, and because the King, supposing them to have been his servants, would have adhered to the ancient Whig tenets. But when, in opposition themselves, they found some millions ready to rally against the Court, and saw their adversaries, the Ministers of the day, siding with the King, they never hesitated a moment in taking their line, and fought gallantly till the battle was won. Without affirming that the altered view of

the question was wholly caused by the position of Parties, and dictated by the Ministers taking the other line, we may at least assert, without any fear of contradiction, that the promptitude with which the change was made by the leaders is traceable to this source; and that their having the power to make their less liberal and enlightened followers in the country join them, doing violence to their most rooted prejudices, can in no other way be accounted for than by referring to the operation of Party tactics. Indeed, this operation alone can explain the phenomenon of the two great factions having changed sides on the whole question; the Tories taking the very part now which the Whigs did in the days of the Somers, the Marlboroughs, the Godolphins, and somewhat earlier, in the times of the Russells and the Sidneys. The solution of the enigma is to be found chiefly in the accidental circumstance of the Parties having at the two different periods been in opposite positions—the Whigs in power at one time, the Tories at the other, and the Crown holding the same course in each case. The only other circumstance that exists to modify this conclusion, is, that the principles of the Whig families at the Revolution led to their being in power; although it would be a bold thing to assert that, if the Tory families had been preferred, through some accident of personal favour, by William and Anne, the Whig families then in opposition would have supported the penal code; or even that, if George I. had turned his back upon them, and courted their adversaries, they would have kept quite clear of Jacobite connexions, which some of the most distinguished, as it was, are well known to have formed.

Nor is there much reason to suppose that had the Parties changed positions in 1792, the Whigs would, as a matter of course, have been against the war. Half the Party were found to be the most strenuous advocates of a rupture with France, and their accession to office as a body followed this avowal. The whole could not pursue the same course; and Mr. Pitt having unhappily declared for war, the opposition was for peace. If any one feels very confident that the great men whom we have been contemplating in their glorious resistance to that ruinous contest, would have maintained peace at all hazards, including a quarrel with the Aristocracy and the Court, had they been George III.'s Ministers, we beseech him to consider how little disposed they showed themselves, after Mr. Pitt's death, to make sacrifices for the great object of pacification, and how forward they were in gratifying the King's prejudices on Hanover, which their new leader declared was as much a British interest as Hampshire. One thing is certain enough,—had the Whigs joined the King and the aristocracy in making war, Mr. Pitt would have been as strenuous an apostle of peace as ever preached that holy word.

If the new line of distinction which now severs the two sets of men be observed, little doubt will be cast upon our former conclusions. The one is for reform, the other against it. But the old Whig Party were always very lukewarm reformers: one section of them were its most bitter enemies—the rest, with few exceptions, its very temperate supporters. Even Mr. Fox's reform of Parliament would have gone into a mighty narrow compass. But there rests no kind of doubt on this as well as other principles having been rather the consequence than the cause of Party distinctions; for when Mr. Pitt in opposition, and afterwards in office, brought forward the question, he received a very moderate and divided support from the Whigs; and no small part of the Government which carried the question in 1831, and of the present Reform Government, are Tories who had before been strenuously opposed to all changes whatever in our parliamentary

system. That the same Ministry of 1831 was substantially Whig, and carried the question by a far greater effort than ever Mr. Pitt made for its advancement, is not to be doubted. But their influence, nay their existence depended upon it: they gained more by it, as a Party, than by any other course they could have gained. This then can form no exception whatever to the position that, when parties are formed mainly for the purpose of obtaining and retaining power, they adopt principles, and act upon them, with a view to serve this main object of the Party union. The people in a country like this have their weight as well as the Court and the aristocracy, and their opinions and feelings must be consulted by Party leaders in order to gain their support. Whatever insincerity there may be in the latter, however they may be suspected of professing opinions for the purpose of their policy, the people can have no such sinister motives. Hence a Party may take popular ground when in opposition with the view of defeating the Court, and it may also take the same ground in office to fortify itself against a hostile Court or a generally unfriendly aristocracy.

This induction of facts is incomplete, if the *instantia negativa*, the converse proof, be wanting, of cases where great principles not espoused by Parties, nor made matter of Party manœuvring, have had a different fate. Unhappily there are comparatively very few questions of importance which have enjoyed this exemption. One of the greatest of all, however, the Slave Trade, is of the number; the Abolition having been first taken up by Thomas Clarkson, a Foxite in opinion, and in Parliament by Mr. Wilberforce, a friend of Mr. Pitt (but neither of them Party men), was never made the subject of Party distinction. Accordingly, the men of both sides were divided on it, according to the colours of their real opinions, and not of their Party differences: nor was it ever either supported or opposed by the marshalled strength of faction. The doctrines of Free Trade and the amendment of the Criminal Law furnish other instances of the same rare description. No one can be at any loss to perceive how very differently these questions have been handled from the Party ones to which we before adverted. No one can be at a loss to perceive how much truth has gained by the remarkable diversity.

We have hitherto been referring to the fate of great principles,—of general questions; but the same will be found to have been the treatment of subjects more personal and accidental. Mr. Pitt, after a short co-operation with the Whigs, sacrificed them to the prejudices of the King and returned to power, while they retired to their opposition places and habits. If, instead of this result, the negociations of 1804 had led to a junction of the two great Parties, he is a bold man who will take upon himself to affirm that the Whigs would on the Treasury Bench have read Lord St. Vincent's famous 10th Report with the same eyes which glared upon Lord Melville from the opposite side of the House, and conducted them to the impeachment of that Minister a few months afterwards. Again, the greatest personal question that ever distracted rather than divided the country, was the treatment of the Queen in 1820. Had the Whigs then been in office under George IV., as they were in habits of Party connexion with him in 1806, would they have been so strenuous in opposing his favourite Bill of Pains and Penalties? It would be a very adventurous thing to assert anything of the kind, when we recollect how unreservedly they lent themselves in 1806 to the first persecution of the ill-fated Queen by the "Delicate Investigation," as it was most inappropriately called, which they conducted in secret and behind the back of the accused. The Tories were then in opposition to the Prince and to the Whig ministry; and

they bitterly denounced that secret proceeding. Who can doubt that had the Whigs in 1820 been the ministers and proposed the Bill, it would have found as strenuous opposition from the Tories as this Bill found from the Whigs? But are we left to our conjectures upon this point? No such matter. The Tories are now in opposition; the Whigs in office; and a bill of attainder has been defended by the Whigs and opposed by the Tories, having for its avowed object to banish men from their country without a trial, or a hearing, or even a notice; and accomplishing this object by declaring their entrance within their land a capital offence. Had the Whigs in power brought forward a bill to exile the Queen without hearing her, and to declare her landing in England high treason, we have a right to affirm that the Tories being in opposition would have strenuously resisted such a measure. Two cases more parallel can hardly be imagined, for there was a charge of treason in both; there was the temporary absence of the party accused; there was a riot or tumult expected upon that party's return; there was the wish to prevent such a return; and there was no desire in either the one case or the other to shed a drop of blood, but only a wish to gain the object by a threat. On the other hand, have the Tories any right to affirm that if they had chanced to be in power when the Canada affairs were to be settled, no bills of attainder would have been passed? The forms of law might have been more artificially and skilfully preserved; but that the principles of substantial justice would have been better maintained towards Papineau and his adherents in 1838 than they were towards Queen Caroline in 1820, we have no right whatever to believe. The Bill of 1820 is the great blot upon their public character, the worst passage by far in the history of their Party; and they must have felt while they assented to its iniquities and plunged the country into the most imminent dangers, that they were yielding to the vilest caprices of an unprincipled and tyrannical master.

It must not be supposed that those who concur in these general remarks upon Party are pronouncing a very severe censure upon all public men in this country, or placing themselves vainly on an eminence removed from strife, and high above all vulgar contentions—

> Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre,
> Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ,
> Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
> Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
> Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
>
> LUCRET. II.

The blame now cast upon politicians affects them all equally; and is only like that which ethical reasoners on the selfish theory of morals may be supposed to throw upon all human conduct. In fact that blame applies not to individuals, but to the system; and that system is proved to be bad;—hurtful to the interests of the country, corrupting to the people, injurious to honest principle, and at the very best a clumsy contrivance for carrying on the affairs of the State.

It is partly the result of our monarchical constitution, in which the prince must rule by influence rather than prerogative; but it is much more to be derived from the aristocratical portion of the constitution. The great families in their struggles with each other and against the Crown, have recourse to Party leagues, and the people are from time to time drawn into the conflict. The evils which flow from this manner of conducting public affairs are manifest. The two greatest unquestionably are, first, the loss of so many able men to the service of the country, as

well as the devotion of almost the whole powers of all leading men to party contests, and the devotion of a portion of these men to obstructing the public service instead of helping it; and next, the sport which, in playing the party game, is made of the most sacred principles, the duping of the people, and the assumption of their aristocratic leaders to dictate their opinions to them. It is a sorry account of any political machine that it is so constructed, as only to be kept in order by the loss of power and the conflict of forces which the first of these faults implies. It is a clumsy and unwieldy movement which can only be effected by the combined operation of jarring principles, which the panegyrists or rather apologists of these anomalies have commended. But it is a radical vice in any system to exclude the people from forming their own opinions, which must, if proceeding from their own impulses, be kept in strict accordance with their interests, that is, with the general good; and it is a flaw, if possible, still more disastrous, to render the people only tools and instruments of an oligarchy, instead of making their power the main spring of the whole engine, and their interest the grand object of all its operations.

Of this we may be well assured, that as Party has hitherto been known amongst us, it can only be borne during the earlier stages of a nation's political growth. While the people are ignorant of their interests, and as little acquainted with their rights as with their duties, they may be treated by the leading factions as they have hitherto been treated by our own. God be praised, they are not now what they were in the palmy days of factious aristocracy, of the Walpoles, and the Foxes, and the Pelhams—never consulted, and never thought of unless when it was desirable that one mob should bawl out "Church and King," and another should echo back "No Pope, and no Pretender." They have even made great advances since the close of the American war, and the earlier periods of the French Revolution, when, through fear of the Catholics, the library of Lord Mansfield, and through hatred of the Dissenters, the apparatus of Dr. Priestley, were committed to the flames. Their progress is now rapid, and their success assured in the attainment of all that can qualify them for self-government, emancipate them from pupilage, and entitle them to undertake the management of their own affairs. Nor will they any more suffer leading men to make up their opinions for them, as doctors do the prescriptions which they are to take, or consent to be the tools and the dupes of party any more.

Let us now by way of contrast rather than comparison, turn our eye towards some eminent leaders of mankind in countries where no Party spirit can ever be shown, or in circumstances where a great danger threatening all alike, excludes the influence of faction altogether, though only for a season, and while the pressure continues.

Contemporary with George III., and with the statesmen whose faint likenesses we have been surveying, were some of the most celebrated persons whom either the old or the new world have produced. Their talents and their fortunes came also in conflict with those of our own rulers, upon some of the most memorable occasions which have exercised the one or affected the other. It will form no inappropriate appendix to the preceding sketches, if we now endeavour to pourtray several of those distinguished individuals.

FRANKLIN.

One of the most remarkable men certainly of our times as a politician, or of any age as a philosopher, was Franklin; who also stands alone in combining together these two characters, the greatest that man can sustain, and in this, that having borne the first part in enlarging science by one of the greatest discoveries ever made, he bore the second part in founding one of the greatest empires in the world. In this truly great man everything seems to concur that goes towards the constitution of exalted merit. First, he was the architect of his own fortune. Born in the humblest station, he raised himself by his talents and his industry, first to the place in society which may be attained with the help of only ordinary abilities, great application and good luck; but next to the loftier heights which a daring and happy genius alone can scale; and the poor Printer's boy, who at one period of his life had no covering to shelter his head from the dews of night, rent in twain the proud dominion of England, and lived to be the ambassador of a commonwealth which he had formed, at the Court of the haughty Monarchs of France who had been his allies.

Then, he had been tried by prosperity as well as adverse fortune, and had passed unhurt through the perils of both. No ordinary apprentice, no commonplace journeyman, ever laid the foundations of his independence in habits of industry and temperance more deep than he did, whose genius was afterwards to rank him with the Galileos and the Newtons of the old world. No patrician born to shine in Courts, or assist at the Councils of Monarchs, ever bore his honours in a lofty station more easily, or was less spoilt by the enjoyment of them, than this common workman did when negociating with Royal representatives, or caressed by all the beauty and fashion of the most brilliant Court in Europe.

Again, he was self-taught in all he knew. His hours of study were stolen from those of sleep and meals, or gained by some ingenious contrivance for reading while the work of his daily calling went on. Assisted by none of the helps which affluence tenders to the studies of the rich, he had to supply the place of tutors, by redoubled diligence, and of commentaries, by repeated perusal. Nay, the possession of books was to be obtained by copying what the art which he himself exercised furnished easily to others.

Next, the circumstances under which others succumb he made to yield, and bent to his own purposes—a successful leader of a revolt that ended in complete triumph after appearing desperate for

many years; a great discoverer in philosophy without the ordinary helps to knowledge; a writer famed for his chaste style without a classical education; a skilful negociator, though never bred to politics; ending as a favourite, nay, a pattern of fashion, when the guest of frivolous Courts, the life which he had begun in garrets and in workshops.

Lastly, combinations of faculties, in others deemed impossible, appeared easy and natural in him. The philosopher, delighting in speculation, was also eminently a man of action. Ingenious reasoning, refined and subtle consultation, were in him combined with prompt resolution, and inflexible firmness of purpose. To a lively fancy, he joined a learned and deep reflection; his original and inventive genius stooped to the convenient alliance of the most ordinary prudence in every-day affairs; the mind that soared above the clouds, and was conversant with the loftiest of human contemplations, disdained not to make proverbs and feign parables for the guidance of apprenticed youths and servile maidens; and the hands that sketched a free constitution for a whole continent, or drew down the lightning from heaven, easily and cheerfully lent themselves to simplify the apparatus by which truths were to be illustrated, or discoveries persued.

His whole course both in acting and in speculation was simple and plain, ever preferring the easiest and the shortest road, nor ever having recourse to any but the simplest means to compass his ends. His policy rejected all refinements, and aimed at accomplishing its purposes by the most rational and obvious expedients. His language was unadorned, and used as the medium of communicating his thoughts, not of raising admiration; but it was pure, expressive, racy. His manner of reasoning was manly and cogent, the address of a rational being to others of the same order; and so concise, that preferring decision to discussion, he never exceeded a quarter of an hour on any public address. His correspondence upon business, whether private or on state affairs, is a model of clearness and compendious shortness; nor can any state papers surpass in dignity and impression, those of which he is believed to have been the author in the earlier part of the American revolutionary war. His mode of philosophising was the purest application of the Inductive principle, so eminently adapted to his nature and so clearly dictated by common sense, that we can have little doubt it would have been suggested by Franklin, if it had not been unfolded by Bacon, though it is as clear that in this case it would have been expounded in far more simple terms. But of all this great man's scientific excellencies, the most remarkable is the smallness, the simplicity, the apparent inadequacy, of the means which he employed in his experimental researches. His discoveries were made with hardly any apparatus at all; and if, at any

time, he had been led to employ instruments of a somewhat less ordinary description, he never rested satisfied until he had, as it were, afterwards translated the process, by resolving the problem with such simple machinery, that you might say he had done it wholly unaided by apparatus. The experiments by which the identity of lightning and electricity was demonstrated, were made with a sheet of brown paper, a bit of twine, a silk thread, and an iron key.

Upon the integrity of this great man, whether in public or in private life, there rests no stain. Strictly honest, and even scrupulously punctual in all his dealings, he preserved in the highest fortune that regularity which he had practised as well as inculcated in the lowest. The phrase which he once used when interrupted in his proceedings upon the most arduous and important affairs, by a demand of some petty item in a long account,—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn,"—has been cited against him as proving the laxity of his dealings when in trust of public money; it plainly proves the reverse; for he well knew that in a country abounding in discussion, and full of bitter personal animosities, nothing could be gained of immunity by refusing to produce his vouchers at the fitting time; and his venturing to use such language demonstrates that he knew his conduct to be really above all suspicion.

In domestic life he was faultless, and in the intercourse of society, delightful. There was a constant good humour and a playful wit, easy and of high relish, without any ambition to shine, the natural fruit of his lively fancy, his solid, natural good sense, and his cheerful temper, that gave his conversation an unspeakable charm, and alike suited every circle, from the humblest to the most elevated. With all his strong opinions, so often solemnly declared, so imperishably recorded in his deeds, he retained a tolerance for those who differed with him which could not be surpassed in men whose principles hang so loosely about them as to be taken up for a convenient cloak, and laid down when found to impede their progress. In his family he was every thing that worth, warm affections, and sound prudence could contribute, to make a man both useful and amiable, respected and beloved. In religion, he would by many be reckoned a latitudinarian; yet it is certain that his mind was imbued with a deep sense of the Divine perfections, a constant impression of our accountable nature, and a lively hope of future enjoyment. Accordingly, his death-bed, the test of both faith and works, was easy and placid, resigned and devout, and indicated at once an unflinching retrospect of the past, and comfortable assurance of the future.

CHARLES CARROL.

We do a thing of very pernicious tendency if we confine the records of history to the most eminent personages who bear a part in the events which it commemorates. There are often others whose sacrifices are much greater, whose perils are more extreme, and whose services are nearly as valuable as those of the more prominent actors, and who yet have, from chance or by the modesty of a retiring and unpretending nature, never stood forward to fill the foremost places, or occupy the larger spaces in the eye of the world. To forget such men is as inexpedient for the public service as it is unjust towards the individuals. But the error is far greater of those who, in recording the annals of revolution, confine their ideas of public merit to the feats of leaders against established tyranny, or the triumphs of orators in behalf of freedom. Many a man in the ranks has done more by his zeal and his self-devotion than any chief to break the chains of a nation, and among such men Charles Carrol, the last survivor of the Patriarchs of the American Revolution, is entitled to the first place.

His family was settled in Maryland ever since the reign of James II., and had during that period been possessed of the same ample property, the largest in the Union. It stood, therefore, at the head of the aristocracy of the country; was naturally in alliance with the Government; could gain nothing while it risked everything by a change of dynasty; and therefore, according to all the rules and the prejudices and the frailties which are commonly found guiding the conduct of men in a crisis of affairs, Charles Carrol might have been expected to take part against the revolt, certainly never to join in promoting it. Such, however, was not this patriotic person. He was among the foremost to sign the celebrated Declaration of Independence. All who did so were believed to have devoted themselves and their families to the Furies. As he set his hand to the instrument, the whisper ran round the Hall of Congress, "There go some millions of property!" And there being many of the same name, when he heard it said, "Nobody will know what Carrol it is," as no one signed more than his name, and one at his elbow addressing him remarked, "You'll get clear—there are several of the name—they will never know which to take." "Not so!" he replied, and instantly added his residence, "of Carrolton."

He was not only a man of firm mind, and steadily-fixed principles; he was also a person of great accomplishments and excellent abilities. Educated in the study of the civil law at one of the French

colleges, he had resided long enough in Europe to perfect his learning in all the ordinary branches of knowledge. On his return to America, he sided with the people against the mother country, and was soon known and esteemed as among the ablest writers of the Independent party. The confidence reposed in him soon after was so great, that he was joined with Franklin in the commission of three sent to obtain the concurrence of the Canadians in the revolt. He was a Member of Congress for the first two trying years, when that body was only fourteen in number, and might rather be deemed a cabinet council for action than anything like a deliberative senate. He then belonged, during the rest of the war, to the legislature of his native state, Maryland, until 1788, when he was elected one of the United States' Senate, and continued for three years to act in this capacity. The rest of his time, until he retired from public life in 1804, was passed as a senator of Maryland. In all these capacities he has left behind him a high reputation for integrity, eloquence, and judgment.

It is usual with Americans to compare the last thirty years of his life to the Indian summer*—sweet as it is tranquil, and partaking neither of the fierce heats of the earlier, nor the chilling frosts of a later season. His days were both crowned with happiness, and lengthened far beyond the usual period of human existence. He lived to see the people whom he had once known 900,000 in number pass twelve millions; a handful of dependent colonists become a nation of freemen; a dependent settlement assume its place among the first-rate powers of the world; and he had the delight of feeling that to this consummation he had contributed his ample share. As no one had run so large a risk by joining the revolt, so no one had adhered to the standard of freedom more firmly, in all its fortunes, whether waving in triumph or over disaster and defeat. He never had despaired of the commonwealth, nor ever had lent his ear to factious councils; never had shrunk from any sacrifice, nor ever had pressed himself forward to the exclusion of men better fitted to serve the common cause. Thus it happened to him that no man was more universally respected and beloved; none had fewer enemies; and, notwithstanding the ample share in which the gifts of fortune were showered upon his house, no one grudged its prosperity.

It would, however, be a very erroneous view of his merits and of the place which he filled in the eye of his country, which should represent him as only respected for his patriotism and his virtues. He had talents and acquirements which enabled him effectually to help the cause he espoused. His knowledge was various; and his eloquence was of a high order. It was, like his character, mild and

* What we call the Michaelmas summer; the "short summer" of the south of Europe.

pleasing; like his deportment, correct and faultless. Flowing smoothly, and executing far more than it seemed to aim at, every one was charmed by it, and many were persuaded. His taste was peculiarly chaste, for he was a scholar of extraordinary accomplishments; and few, if any, of the speakers in the New World came nearer the model of the more refined oratory practised in the parent state. Nature and ease, want of effort, gentleness united with sufficient strength, are noted as its enviable characteristics; and as it thus approached the tone of conversation, so, long after he ceased to appear in public, his private society is represented as displaying much of his rhetorical powers, and has been compared, not unhappily, by a late writer, to the words of Nestor, which fell like vernal snows as he spake to the people. In commotions, whether of the senate or the multitude, such a speaker, by his calmness and firmness joined, might well hope to have the weight, and to exert the control and mediatory authority of him, *pietate gravis et meritis*, who

——regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.

In 1825, on the anniversary of the Half Century after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the day was kept over the whole Union as a grand festival, and observed with extraordinary solemnity. As the clock struck the hour when that mighty instrument had been signed, another bell was also heard to toll: it was the passing bell of John Adams, one of the two surviving Presidents who had signed the Declaration. The other was Jefferson; and it was soon after learned that at this same hour he too had expired in a remote quarter of the country.

There now remained only Carrol to survive his fellows; and he had already reached extreme old age; but he lived yet seven years longer, and, in 1832, at the age of 95, the venerable patriarch was gathered to his fathers.*

The Congress went into mourning on his account for three months, as they had done for Washington, and for him alone.

If we turn from the truly great men whom we have been contemplating, to their celebrated contemporary in the Old World, who only affected the philosophy that Franklin possessed, and employed his talents for civil and military affairs, in extinguishing that independence which Franklin's life was consecrated to establish, the contrast is marvellous indeed, between the Monarch and the Printer.

* His family yet flourishes in America, and three of his grand-daughters are allied by marriage to three noble families in England: among them one is now Marchioness Wellesley, the amiable and accomplished consort of that great statesman, whose outset in life was marked by a cordial support of American Independence.

FREDERIC II.

In one particular this celebrated Prince may be said to resemble the great Republican. His earlier years were spent in the school of adversity. Whether the influence of this discipline, usually so propitious to the character of great men, was exerted in chastening his principles, and in calling forth and regulating those feelings which the education of a court tends either to stifle or pervert, may be learnt not only from the private history of his reign, but from some anecdotes preserved, of his conduct immediately after he came to the crown; while, as yet, his heart could not have become callous from the habits of uncontrolled dominion, nor his principles unsettled by the cares of his turbulent career. When William discovered his son's plan for escaping from Prussia, he caused him to be arrested, together with his confidential friend De Catt, and instantly brought to trial before a military commission. The interposition of Austria alone saved the prince's life; but he was thrown into prison at the fort of Custrin, where his friend was beheaded on a scaffold raised before his apartment to the level of the window, from which he was forced to view this afflicting spectacle. He was so much overpowered that he sunk senseless into the chair which had been placed to keep him at the window, and only recovered to bewail, with every appearance of the most poignant feeling, the fate of this unhappy young man, who had fallen a sacrifice to his faithful attachment. The savage conduct of William, indeed, left him scarce any other occupation; his confinement was as strict, and his treatment as harsh, as that of the meanest felon. By degrees, however, his guards watched him less closely, and he was even permitted to steal out under cover of night, by circuitous paths, to a château in the neighbourhood, the residence of a very amiable nobleman's family, who received him with the greatest kindness, and exposed themselves to constant risk on his account. Among them he spent as much of his time, for above a year, as he could gain from the humanity or treachery of his jailor. It was chiefly with music and reading that he consoled himself in the gloom of his prison; and those good folks not only furnished him with books and candles, but made little concerts for him in the evenings, when he could escape to enjoy their society. The young Wrechs (for that was the name of this family) were sufficiently accomplished and sprightly to gain Frederic's esteem. He delighted much in their company; and though they were so numerous, that the baron was kept in narrow circumstances by the necessary expenses of their maintenance and education, he contrived, by straiten-

ing himself still more, to scrape together supplies of money to the amount of above six thousand rixdollars, with which he assisted, from time to time, his royal guest.

Such were the obligations which Frederic owed, during this eventful period of his life, first to the House of Austria, whose spirited and decisive interference saved him from the scaffold; next, to the unfortunate De Catt, who had sacrificed his life in the attempt to aid his escape; and, lastly, to the amiable family of the Wrechs, who, at the imminent risk of their lives, and at a certain expense little suited to their moderate circumstances, had tenderly alleviated the hardships of his confinement. As Frederic mounted the throne a short time after he was set at liberty, we might naturally expect that the impression of favours like these would outlive the ordinary period of royal memory. The first act of his reign was to invade the hereditary dominions of Austria, and réduce to the utmost distress the daughter and representative of the monarch whose timely interposition had saved his life, by heading a powerful combination against her, after stripping her of an invaluable province. The family and relations of De Catt never received, during the whole of his reign, even a smile of royal favour. To the Wrechs he not only never repaid a kreutzer of the money which they had pinched themselves to raise for his accommodation, but manifested a degree of coldness amounting to displeasure: so that this worthy and accomplished family were in a kind of disgrace during his time, never received well at court, nor promoted to any of the employments which form in some sort the patrimony of the aristocracy. They were favoured by Prince Henry; and all that they could boast of owing to the king was, to use an expression of his most zealous panegyrist, that "*he did not persecute them*" on account of his brother's patronage. His defenders screened this ungrateful conduct behind the Prussian law, which prohibits the loan of money to princes of the blood, and declares all debts contracted by them null. But since the *king* was to govern himself by the enactments of this law, it would have been well if the *prince*, too, had considered them. We have heard of Lewis XII. proudly declaring that it was unworthy the King of France to revenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orleans. It was reserved for the unfeeling meanness of Frederic to show us, that the King was not bound by the highest obligations of the Prince of Prussia—that he could shelter himself from the claims of honour and gratitude, by appealing to laws which had been generously violated in his behalf.

But it may be fair to mention the solitary instance of a contrary description, which we can find in comparing his conduct on the throne with the favours received during his misfortunes. He had been assisted in his musical relaxations at Potsdam by the daughter of a citizen, who, without any personal charms, had the accomplish-

ment most valuable to the prince, secluded as he was from all society, and depending for amusement almost entirely on his flute. His father no sooner heard of this intimacy, than he supposed there must be some criminal intercourse between the young amateurs, and proceeded to meet the tender passion by the universal remedy which he was in the habit of administering to his subjects. The lady was seized, delivered over to the executioner, and publicly whipped through the streets of Potsdam. This cruel disgrace, of course, put an end to the concerts, and to her estimation in society. When Frederic came to the throne, she was reduced to the humble station of a hackney-coachman's wife; and, with a rare effort of gratitude and generosity, he was pleased to settle upon her a pension, of very little less than thirty-five pounds a-year.

There is nothing in the history of his after life that shows any improvement in the feelings with which he began it, and which his own sufferings had not chastened, nor the kindness that relieved them, softened. In one of his battles, happening to turn his head round, he saw his nephew, the Hereditary Prince, fall to the ground, his horse being killed under him. Frederic, thinking the rider was shot, cried, without stopping as he rode past, "Ah! there's the Prince of Prussia killed; let his saddle and bridle be taken care of!"

William Augustus, the King's elder brother, and heir apparent to the crown, had for many years been his principal favourite. He was a prince of great abilities, and singularly amiable character—modest almost to timidity—and repaying the friendship of Frederic by a more than filial devotion. He had served near his person in all his campaigns, had constantly distinguished himself in war, and, after the disastrous battle of Collin, was entrusted with the command of half the retreating army. While the King succeeded in bringing off his own division safe into Saxony, the Prince, attacked on all hands by the whole force of the Austrians, suffered several inconsiderable losses on his march, and gained the neighbourhood of Dresden with some difficulty. He was received, as well as his whole staff, with the greatest marks of displeasure. For several days the King spoke to none of them; and then sent a message by one of his generals—"*Que pour bien faire, il devait leur faire trancher la tête, excepté au général Winterfeldt.*" The Prince was of too feeling a disposition not to suffer extremely from this treatment. He addressed a letter to the King, in which he stated that the fatigues of the campaign, and his distress of mind, had totally injured his health; and received for answer a permission to retire, couched in the most bitter and humiliating reproaches. From this time he lived entirely in the bosom of his family, a prey to the deepest melancholy, but retaining for the King his sentiments of warm attachment, and respect bordering upon veneration, although never permitted to approach his person.

One interview only brought the brothers together after their unhappy separation. The different members of the Royal family, during the most disastrous period of the Seven years' war, when the existence of the house of Brandenburg seemed to depend on a diminution in the number of its enemies, united their voice in exhorting the King to attempt making such a peace with France and Sweden as might be consistent with the honour of his crown. Prince William was entreated to lay their wishes before him; and, oppressed as he was with disease, trembling to appear in his brother's presence, scarcely daring to hope even a decorous reception, he yet thought his duty required this effort, and he supplicated an audience. Frederic allowed him to detail fully his whole views, and was willing to hear from him the unanimous prayers of his relations. He appeared before the King; besought him, conjured him, with tears in his eyes, and embraced his knees with all the warmth of fraternal affection, and all the devotion of the most enthusiastic loyalty. No sentiment of pity for the cause he pleaded, nor any spark of his own ancient affection, was kindled in Frederic's bosom at so touching a scene. He remained silent and stern during the whole interview, and then put an end to it by these words: "*Monsieur, vous partirez demain pour Berlin: allez faire des enfans: vous n'êtes bon qu'à cela.*" The Prince did not long survive this memorable audience.

Such was the fate of his favourite brother. The Princess Amelia was his youngest and most beloved sister. She one of the most charming and accomplished women in Europe. But after being cajoled by her elder sister, Ulrica, out of a Royal marriage, which that intriguer obtained for herself, Amelia fell in love with the well-known Baron Trenck, who was by her brother shut up in a fortress for ten years; and Frederic daily saw pining away before his eyes his favourite sister, become blind and paralysed with mental suffering, and saw it without a pang or a sigh, much more without a thought of relieving it by ceasing to persecute her friend.

Having contemplated this monarch in the relations of domestic life, it is now fit that we should view him among his friends. Of these, there was absolutely not one whom he did not treat with exemplary harshness, except Jordan, who indeed lived only a few years after Frederic came to the throne, while he was too much occupied with war to allow him time for mixing with that select society, in which he afterwards vainly hoped to enjoy the pleasures of entire equality, and where always, sooner or later, the King prevailed over the companion. Of all his friends, the Marquis d'Argens seems to have been the most cordially and most respectfully attached to his person. In the field he was his constant companion: their time in winter quarters was passed in each other's society. At one time the King had no other confidant; and he it was who turned aside his fixed

purpose to commit suicide, when, at the most desperate crisis of his affairs, life had become unbearable. But D'Argens committed the fault seldom pardoned by any prince, by Frederic never: he acted as if he believed his Royal friend sincere in desiring that they should live on equal terms. The pretext for finally discarding his ancient companion was poor in the extreme. When the marquis consented to come into Frederic's service, and leave his own country, it was upon the express condition that he should have permission to return home when he reached the age of seventy. He had a brother in France, to whom he was tenderly attached, and owed many obligations. As he approached this period of life, his brother prepared a house and establishment for his reception; and nothing was wanting but the king's leave to make him retire from a service to which he was now ill adapted by his years, and rendered averse by the coldness daily more apparent in the treatment he received. But Frederic, notwithstanding the bargain, and in spite of his diminished attachment to this faithful follower, peremptorily refused to grant his discharge: he allowed him a sort of furlough to see his brother, and took his promise to return in six months. When the visit was paid, and the marquis had arrived at Bourg on his return, the exertions which he made to get back within the stipulated time threw him into a dangerous illness. As soon as the six months expired, Frederic receiving no letter and hearing nothing of him, became violently enraged, and ordered his pensions to be stopped, and his name to be struck off the lists with disgrace. The account of these precipitate measures reached the marquis as he was on the point of continuing his journey after his recovery. And when he died, the king caused a monument to be raised to his memory, as a proof that he repented of his harsh and hasty proceedings against him.

The treatment which Marshal Schwerin met with for gaining the battle of Molwitz, is well known. In order to execute the manœuvre upon which the victory depended, it was necessary that the king should retire from the field at a moment when success was almost despaired of. He consented, and the tide was turned by the consummate skill of the general. Ever after, Frederic treated him with marked coldness; neglected him as far as the necessity of claiming assistance from his genius would permit; and, finally, was the cause of his exposing himself to certain destruction at the battle of Prague, where this great master of the art of war fell undistinguished in the crowd, leaving his family to the neglect of an ungrateful sovereign, and his memory to be honoured by the enemy whom he had conquered.*

* The monument erected in the neighbourhood of Prague, upon the spot where the greatest of the Prussian captains fell, was raised by the Emperor Joseph II.

After Frederic had quarrelled with Voltaire, he heard of a Chevalier Masson, whose wit and accomplishments were represented as sufficient to replace those which he had just lost by his own vanity and caprice. It was with difficulty that this gentleman could be induced to quit the French service, in which he stood high; and when he arrived at Berlin, though it very soon became apparent that Voltaire's place was not one of those which are so easily supplied, yet he had qualities sufficient to recommend him, and was admitted instantly to the royal circles. A single indiscreet sally of wit ruined him in the king's favour. He retired in disgust to his study, where he lived the life of a hermit for many years, his existence unknown to the world, and the most important of its concerns equally unknown to him. As he had thus sacrificed all his prospects to accept of Frederic's patronage, and had wasted the prime of his life in attending upon his capricious pleasure, it might have been expected that he would at least have been permitted to enjoy his poor pension, so dearly purchased, to the end of his inoffensive days. But after twenty years of seclusion, such as we have described, he had his name suddenly struck from the lists, and his appointments stopped, and was obliged to seek his own country with the savings which his parsimony had enabled him to make.

The same selfish spirit, or carelessness towards the feelings and claims of others, which marked Frederic's conduct to his family and friends, was equally conspicuous in his treatment of inferior dependants, both in the relations of society and of business. In his familiar intercourse with those whom he permitted to approach him, we can find no line steadily drawn for the regulation of his own demeanour, or of theirs. His inclination seems to have been, that he should always maintain the manifest superiority, without owing it in appearance to his exalted station; but as soon as he lost, or was near losing, this first place in a contest upon fair terms, he was ready suddenly to call in the aid of the king. Thus it perpetually happened, that a conversation begun upon an equal footing, was terminated by a single look of authority from the royal companion. He never failed to indulge his sarcastic humour and high spirits in sallies directed with little delicacy or discrimination against all around him; and unless he happened to have, at the moment, such answers as might, without any possibility of resistance, crush those whom his railleries had forced into a repartee, he was sure to supply the defect by an appeal to weapons which he alone of the circle could use. It is not describing his behaviour correctly, to say that in the hours of relaxation he was fond of forgetting the monarch, provided his company never forgot him. This would at least have been one general rule, one principle of behaviour to which all might conform as soon as it was made known. But Frederic laid down and took up his sceptre at moments which his

guests could never divine; and, far from insisting that they should always have it in their eyes, it would often have been a ground for his using it to stop the colloquy, if he had perceived them persevere in addressing the sovereign, when he was determined they should talk to a comrade. The only rule then of his society, was entire submission to his caprices; not merely a passive obedience, but a compliance with every whim and turn of his mind; sometimes requiring to be met with exertions, sometimes to be received in quiet. That we may form some idea of the nature and extent of this meanness, so poor in one who called himself a Royal Philosopher, it is proper to remark, that all those wits or other dependants with whom he passed his time, were entirely supported by his pensions; and that, beside the dangers of a fortress, any resistance was sure to cost them and their families their daily bread.

His ordinary mode of enjoying society was, to send for a few of the philosophers who were always in readiness, either when he dined, or had an hour's leisure from business, which he wished to beguile by the recreations of talking and receiving worship. On one of these occasions, the savans in waiting were, Quintus Icilius* and Thiebault; and it happened that the king, after giving his opinion at great length, and with his usual freedom, upon the arrangement of Providence, which conceals from mortals the period of their lives, called upon them to urge whatever could be stated in its defence. Quintus, unwarily supposing that he really wished to hear the question discussed, gave a reason, which appears completely satisfactory. The philosopher of Sans-Souci, however, only desired his guests to take the opposite side of the argument, in the conviction that they were not to invalidate his own reasoning. And when Quintus fairly destroyed the force of it, by suggesting, that the certain knowledge of our latter end would infallibly diminish the ardour of our exertions for a considerable period beforehand, the king thought proper to break out into a violent personal invective. "Ici" (says Thiebault, who witnessed the extremely but by no means singular scene) "la foudre partit aussi subite qu'imprévue." "*Cette façon de juger*," lui dit le Roi, '*est bonne pour vous, âme de boue et de fange! Mais apprenez, si toutefois vous le pouvez, que ceux qui ont l'âme noble, élevée, et sensible aux charmes de la vertu, ne raisonnent point sur des maximes aussi misérables et aussi honteuses! Apprenez, Monsieur, que l'honnête homme fait toujours le bien tant qu'il peut le faire, et uniquement parce que c'est le bien, sans rechercher quels sont ceux qui en profi-*

* This was a Leyden professor, originally named Guichard, who being fond of military science, had been transformed into a colonel of chasseurs by the king; and then, from his admiration of Julius Cæsar's aid-de-camp, had been ordered to assume the name of Quintus Icilius.

teront; mais vous ne sentez point ces choses; vous n'êtes point fait pour les sentir." Vol. I. p. 84.

At one of his literary entertainments, when, in order to promote free conversation, he reminded the circle that there was no monarch present, and that every one might think aloud, the conversation chanced to turn upon the faults of different governments and rulers. General censures were passing from mouth to mouth, with the kind of freedom which such hints were calculated, and apparently intended, to inspire. But Frederic suddenly put a stop to the topic by these words—"*Paix! paix! Messieurs; prenez garde, voilà le roi qui arrive; il ne faut pas qu'il vous entende, car peut-être se croirait-il obligé d'être encore plus méchant que vous.*" V. p. 329.

These sketches may serve to illustrate the conduct of Frederic in society, and to show how far he could forget his power in his familiar intercourse with inferiors. As yet, we have seen only caprice, and that meanness, or, to call it by the right name, cowardice, which consists in trampling upon the fallen, and fighting with those who are bound. His treatment of persons employed in his service, and his manner of transacting business with them, presents us with equal proofs of a tyrannical disposition, and examples of injustice and cruelty, altogether unparalleled in the history of civilized monarchies. It is well known, that a large proportion of the Prussian army owes its origin to a system of crimping, which the recruiting officers carry on in foreign states, and chiefly in the distant parts of the empire. As Frederic II. did not introduce this odious practice, he might, perhaps, be allowed to escape severe censure for not abolishing it generally; but there can be only one opinion upon his conduct in those particular cases which came to his knowledge, and where his attention was specifically called to the grievous injuries sustained by individuals. Of the many anecdotes which have been preserved, relative to this point, one sample may suffice. A French captain of cavalry, returning to his native country, after a long absence in the West Indies, was seized, in his journey along the Rhine, by some Prussian recruiting officers; his servant was spirited away, and he was himself sent to the army as a private soldier, in which capacity he was forced to serve during the rest of the Seven-years' war, against the cause, be it remarked, of his own country. In vain he addressed letter after letter to his friends, acquainting them of his cruel situation: the Prussian post-office was too well regulated to let any of these pass. His constant memorials to the King were received indeed, but not answered. After the peace was concluded, he was marched with his regiment into garrison; and, at the next review, the King, coming up to his colonel, inquired if a person named M—— was still in his corps. Upon his being produced, the

King offered him a commission; he declined it, and received his discharge.

It was thus that Frederic obtained, by kidnapping, the troops whom he used in plundering his neighbours. His finances were frequently indebted to similar means for their supply. The King's favourite secretary, M. Galser, by his orders, caused fifteen millions of ducats to be made in a very secret matter, with a third of base metal in their composition. This sum was then entrusted to a son of the Jew Ephraim, so well known in the history of Frederic's coinage, for the purpose of having it circulated in Poland, where it was accordingly employed in buying up every portable article of value that could be found. The Poles, however, soon discovered that they had been imposed upon, and contrived to transfer the loss to their neighbours, by purchasing with the new ducats whatever they could procure in Russia. The Russians, in like manner, found out the cheat, and complained so loudly that the Empress interfered, and made inquiries, which led to a discovery of the quarter whence the issue had originally come. She then ordered the bad money to be brought into her treasury, and exchanged it for good coin. She insisted upon Frederic taking the false ducats at their nominal value, which he did not dare to refuse, but denied that he had any concern in the transaction; and to prove this, sent for his agent Galser, to whom he communicated the dilemma in which he was, and the necessity of giving him up as the author of the imposture. Galser objected to so dishonourable a proposal. The King flew into a passion; kicked him violently on the shins, according to his custom; sent him to the fortress of Spandaw for a year and a half, and then banished him to a remote village of Mecklenburg.

Frederic acted towards his officers upon a principle the most unjust, as well as unfeeling, that can be imagined. It was his aim to encourage military service among the higher ranks; the commonalty he conceived were adapted for the meaner employments in the state, and should not occupy those stations in the army, which were, he thought, the birthright of the aristocracy. But instead of carrying this view into effect, by the only arrangement which was reconcileable with good faith—establishing a certain standard of rank below which no one should be admitted to hold a commission either in peace or in war—he allowed persons of all descriptions to enter the army as officers, when there was any occasion for their services, and, after the necessity had ceased, dismissed those whose nobility appeared questionable. Thus, nothing could be more terrible to the brave men, who for years had led his troops to victory, or shared in their distresses, than the return of peace. After sacrificing their prospects in life, their best years, their health, with their ease, to the most

painful service, and sought, through toils and wounds, and misery, the provision which a certain rank in the profession affords, they were liable, at a moment's warning, to be turned ignominiously out of the army, whose fortunes they had followed, because the King either discovered, or fancied, that their family was deficient in rank.

We shall pass over the extreme jealousy with which Frederic treated all those to whom he was under the necessity of confiding any matters of state. Nothing, in the history of Eastern manners, exceeds the rigorous confinement of the cabinet secretaries. But we shall proceed to one example of the respect which the Justinian of the North, the author of the Frederician code, paid to the persons of those entrusted with the administration of justice in his dominions. This great lawgiver seems never to have discovered the propriety of leaving his judges to investigate the claims of suitors, any more than he could see the advantage of committing to tradesmen and farmers the management of their private affairs. In the progress which he made round his states at the season of the reviews, he used to receive from all quarters the complaints of those who thought themselves aggrieved by the course of justice; and because he had to consider the whole of these cases in addition to all the other branches of his employment, he concluded that he must be a more competent arbiter than they whose lives are devoted to the settlement of one part of such disputes. In one of his excursions, a miller, a tenant of his own, complained to him that his stream was injured by a neighbouring proprietor; and the King ordered his chancellor to have the complaint investigated. The suit was brought in form, and judgment given against the miller. Next year, he renewed his application, and affirmed that his narrative of the facts was perfectly true; yet the court had nonsuited him. The King remitted the cause to the second tribunal, with injunctions to be careful in doing the man justice: he was, however, again cast; and once more complained bitterly to the King, who secretly sent a major of his army to examine on the spot the question upon which his two highest judicatures had decided, and to report. The gallant officer, who was also a neighbour of the miller, reported in his favour; and two other persons, commissioned in the same private manner, returned with similar answers. Frederic immediately summoned his chancellor and the three judges who had determined the cause; he received them in a passion; would not allow them to speak a word in their defence; upbraided them as unjust judges, nay, as miscreants; and wrote out with his own hand a sentence in favour of the miller, with full costs, and a sum as damages which he had never claimed. He then dismissed the chancellor from his office, with language too abusive to be repeated; and, after violently kicking the three judges in the

shins, pushed them out of his closet, and sent them to prison at the fortress of Spandaw. All the other judges and ministers of justice were clearly of opinion, that the sentence originally given out against the miller was a right one, and that the case admitted of no doubt. As for the chancellor, it was universally allowed that the matter came not within his jurisdiction; and that he could not possibly have known any thing of the decision. At last a foreign journalist undertook the investigation of the business; and being placed beyond the limits of the royal philosopher's caprice, he published a statement which left no shadow of argument in the miller's favour. As Frederic attended to what was written abroad, and in French, Linguet's production quickly opened his eyes. Not a word was said in public; none of those measures were adopted, by which a great mind would have rejoiced to acknowledge such errors, and offer some atonement to outraged justice. An irritable vanity alone seemed poorly to regulate the ceremony of propitiation; and he who had been mean enough to insult the persons of his judges in the blindness of anger, could scarcely be expected, after his eyes were opened, to show that pride which makes men cease to deserve blame, by avowing, while they atone for, their faults. Orders were *secretly* given to the miller's adversary, that he should not obey the sentence. With the same *secrecy* a compensation was made to the miller himself. The three judges, after lingering many months in prison, were *quietly* liberated: the chancellor was allowed to remain in disgrace, because he had been most of all injured; and the faithful subjects of his majesty knew too well their duty and his power, to interrupt this paltry silence by any whispers upon what had passed.

If this system of interference, this intermeddling and controling spirit, thus appeared, even in the judicial department, much more might it be looked for in the other branches of his administration. It was, in truth, the vice of his whole reign; not even suspended in its exercise during war, but raging with redoubled violence, when the comparative idleness of peace left his morbid activity to prey upon itself. If any one is desirous of seeing how certainly a government is unsuccessful in trade and manufactures, he may consult the sketches of this boasted statesman's speculations in that line, as profitably as the accounts which have been published of the royal works and fabrics in Spain. But there are particulars in the policy of Frederic, exceeding, for absurdity and violence, whatever is to be met with in the descriptions of Spanish political economy. We have only room for running over a few detached examples.—When a china manufactory was to be set a-going at Berlin on the royal account, it was thought necessary to begin by forcing a market for the wares. Accordingly, the Jews, who cannot marry without the royal permis-

sion, were obliged to pay for their licenses by purchasing a certain quantity of the King's cups and saucers at a fixed price.—The introduction of the silk culture was a favourite scheme with Frederic; and to make silk-worms spin and mulberry-trees grow in the Prussian sands, no expense must be spared. Vast houses and manufactories were built for such as chose to engage in the speculation; a direct premium was granted on the exportation of silk stuffs; and medals were awarded to the workmen who produced above five pounds of the article in a year. But nature is very powerful, even among Prussian grenadiers. In the lists of exports we find no mention made of silk, while it forms a considerable and regular branch of the goods imported.—The settlement of colonists in waste lands was another object of eminent attention and proportionate expense. Foreign families were enticed and transported by the crimps whom he employed all over Europe for recruiting his forces; they received grants of land; were provided with houses, implements, and live-stock, and furnished with subsistence, until their farms became sufficiently productive to support them. Frederic called this supplying the blanks which war made in his population.—His rage for encouraging the introduction of new speculations was quite ungovernable. No sooner did his emissaries inform him of any ingenious manufacturer or mechanic, in France or elsewhere, than he bribed him to settle in Berlin, by the most extravagant terms. When he found the success of the project too slow, or its gains, from the necessity of circumstances, fell short of expectation, he had only one way of getting out of the scrape;—he broke his bargain with the undertaker, and generally sent him to a fortress; in the course of which transaction, it always happened that somebody interfered under the character of a minister, a favourite, etc., to pillage both parties. Experience never seemed to correct this propensity. It was at an advanced period of his reign that he sent orders to his ambassadors to find him a general projector—a man who might be employed wholly in fancying new schemes, and discussing those which should be submitted to him. Such a one was accordingly procured, and tempted, by large bribes, to settle at Potsdam.

Frederic's grand instrument in political economy was the establishment of monopolies. Whether an art was to be encouraged, or a public taste modified, or a revenue gleaned, or the balance of trade adjusted, a monopoly was the expedient. Thus the exclusive privilege was granted to one family, of supplying Berlin and Potsdam with firewood; the price was instantly doubled; and the King received no more than eight thousand a year of the profits. Well did the celebrated Helvetius remark of some applications for such contracts, upon which the King demanded his sentiments, "Sire, you need not trouble yourself with reading them through; they all speak

the same language—'*We beseech your Majesty to grant us leave to rob your people of such a sum; in consideration of which, we engage to pay you a certain share of the pillage.*'" Frederic was led to conceive that his subjects drank too much coffee in proportion to their means, and ate too little nourishing food. The universal remedy was applied; and the supply of all the coffee used within his dominions, given exclusively to a company. The price was thus, as he had wished, greatly raised, and some of the spoil shared with his treasury; but the taste of the people remained as determined in favour of coffee as before, and of course was much more detrimental to their living. Tobacco, in like manner, he subjected to a strict monopoly; and when he wished to have arms furnished very cheap to his troops, he had again recourse to his usual expedient: he conferred upon the house of Daum and Splikberg, armourers, the exclusive privilege of refining sugar, on condition that they should sell him muskets and caps at a very low price. In all his fiscal policy, he was an anxious observer of the balance of trade, and never failed to cast a pensive eye upon the tables of exports and imports. "Every year," says one of his panegyrists, "did he calculate with extreme attention the sums which came into his states, and those which went out; and he saw, with uneasiness, that the balance was not so favourable as it ought to be."* After all his monopolies and premiums for the encouragement of production, he found, it seems, that the exports of his kingdom could not be augmented. "Therefore," adds this author, "he had only one resource left—to diminish the importation;" which he accordingly attempted, by new monopolies and prohibitions.

It remains, before completing our estimate of Frederic's character, that we should recollect his public conduct in the commonwealth of Europe, where he was born to hold so conspicuous a station. And here, while we wonder at the abilities which led him to success, it is impossible not to admit that they belonged to that inferior order which can brook an alliance with profligacy and entire want of principle. The history of the Prussian monarchy, indeed, is that of an empire scraped together by industry, and fraud, and violence, from neighbouring states. By barter, and conquest, and imposture, its manifold districts have been gradually brought under one dynasty; not a patch of the motley mass, but recalls the venality or weakness of the surrounding powers, and the unprincipled usurpations of the house of Brandenburgh. But it was Frederic II. whose strides, far surpassing those of his ancestors, raised his family to the rank of a primary power; enabled him to baffle the coalition which his ambition had raised against him; and gave the means of forming, him-

* Thiebault, iv. 127.

self, a new conspiracy for the destruction of whatever principles had been held most sacred by the potentates of modern times. It is in vain that we dissemble with ourselves, and endeavour to forget our own conduct at that fatal crisis. We may rail at Jacobinism, and the French Revolution—impute to the timidity of the other powers the insolent dominion of Republican France—and exhaust our effeminate license of tongue upon the chief, who, by wielding her destinies, made himself master of half the world. Europe suffered by, and is still suffering for, the partition of Poland. Then it was, that public principles were torn up and scattered before the usurpers of the day;—then it was, that England and France poorly refused to suspend their mutual animosities, and associate in support of right, when other states, forgetting greater jealousies, were combined to violate the law;—then it was, that power became the measure of duty—that ambition learnt all the lessons which it has since been practising of *arrondissements*, and equivalents,a nd indemnities—that an assurance of impunity and success was held out to those who might afterwards abandon all principle, provided they were content with a share of the plunder, and that the lesson was learnt which the settlers of Europe practised in 1814 and 1815, the lesson which they are again practising in 1839, of transferring from the weak to the strong whatever portions of territory it may please them to take, without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants more than the cattle that drag the plough through their fields. While we look back with detestation, then, on the conduct of those powers who perpetrated the crime, and most of all on Frederic, who contrived it, let us also reflect, with shame, on the pusillanimity of those who saw, yet helped not; and, in justice to the memory of a truly great man, let us bear in mind, that he who afterwards warned us against the usurpations of France at their nearer approach, raised his voice against the dereliction of principle which paved the way for them in the Partition of Poland.*

The details into which we have entered, as descriptive of Frederic's character, may seem to be out of keeping in a sketch like this. But the universal belief of his greatness, and the disposition to exalt his merits because of the success which followed his ambition, render it necessary to reduce those merits to their true dimensions, which no general description could effect.

Upon the whole, all well-regulated minds will turn from a minute view of this famous personage, impressed with no veneration for his character, either as a member of society, a ruler of the people, or a part of the European community. That he possessed the talents of an accomplished warrior, and an elegant wit, it would be absurd to

* Mr. Burke.

deny, and superfluous to demonstrate. He has left us, in his victories and his writings, the best proofs; and all that is preserved of his conversation leads to a belief that it surpassed his more careful efforts. He ranked unquestionably in the first class of warriors; nor is it doubtful that the system by which, when carried to its full extent, Napoleon's victories were gained, had its origin in the strategy of Frederic,—the plan, namely, of rapidly moving vast masses of troops, and always bringing a superior force to bear upon the point of attack. His administration, whether military or civil, was singularly marked by promptitude and energy. Wherever active exertion was required, or could secure success, he was likely to prevail; and as he was in all things a master of those inferior abilities which constitute what we denominate address, it is not wonderful that he was uniformly fortunate in the cabinets of his neighbours. The encouragements which he lavished on learned men were useful, though not always skilfully bestowed; and in this, as in all the departments of his government, we see him constantly working mischief by working too much. His Academy was no less under command than the best disciplined regiment in his service; and did not refuse to acknowledge his authority upon matters of scientific opinion or of taste in the arts. His own literary acquirements were limited to the *belles lettres*, and moral sciences; even of these he was far from being completely master. His practice, as an administrator, is inconsistent with an extensive or sound political knowledge; and his acquaintance with the classics was derived from French translations; he knew very little Latin, and no Greek. To his sprightliness in society, and his love of literary company, so rare in princes, he owes the reputation of a philosopher; and to the success of his intrigues and his arms, the appellation of Great:—a title which is the less honourable, that mankind have generally agreed to bestow it upon those to whom their gratitude was least of all due.

GUSTAVUS III.

The nephew of Frederic II. was Gustavus III. of Sweden, and he is certainly entitled to rank among the more distinguished men of his age. It was the saying of Frederic, "My nephew is an extraordinary person; he succeeds in all he undertakes;" and considering the difficulties of his position, the adverse circumstances in which some of his enterprises were attempted, his success amply justified the panegyric at the time it was pronounced, and before the military disasters of his reign.

He was born with a great ambition to distinguish both his country among the nations of Europe and himself among her sovereigns. Inflamed with the recollection of former Swedish monarchs, and impatient of the low position to which the ancient renown of his country had fallen, through a succession of feeble princes, he formed the project of relieving the crown from the trammels imposed upon it by an overwhelming aristocracy, as the only means by which the old glories of Sweden could be revived, and the influence of the Gustavuses and the Charleses restored. The king of the country, indeed, when he ascended the throne, was its sovereign only in name. He had all the responsibility of the government cast upon him; he had all its weight resting upon his shoulders; he had all the odium of executing the laws to suppress sedition, to levy taxes, to punish offenders. But neither in making those laws, nor in guiding the policy of the state, nor in administering its resources, had he any perceptible influence whatever. The crown was a mere pageant of state, wholly destitute of power, and only supposed to exist because the multitude, accustomed to be governed by kings, required acts of authority to be promulged in the royal name, and because it was convenient to have some quarter upon which the blame of all that was unpopular in the conduct of the government might rest. The real power of the state was certainly in the hands of the Aristocracy, who ruled, through the medium of the States, an assembly of nominal representatives of the country in which the order of the nobles alone bore sway. The Senate, in fact, governed the country. In them was vested almost all the patronage of the state; they could compel meetings of the Diet at any time; they even claimed the command of the army, and issued their orders to the troops without the king's consent.

When Gustavus was abroad on his travels, being then about 22 years of age, his father died, and from Paris, where the intelligence reached him, he addressed a Declaration filled with the most extravagant expressions of devotion to the constitution, zeal for the liberties of his people, and abhorrence of everything tending towards absolute government, or what in Sweden is termed "Sovereignty;" for the Swedes, like the Romans, regarded monarchy, except in name, as equivalent to tyranny. He vowed that "deeming it his chiefest glory to be the first citizen of a free state" he should regard all those "as his wort enemies who, being traitorous to the country, should upon any pretext whatever seek to introduce unlimited royal authority into Sweden," and he reminded the States of the oath which he had solemnly sworn to the constitution. Those who read this piece were struck with the overdone expressions in which it was couched; and profound observers did not hesitate to draw conclusions wholly unfavourable to the sincerity of the royal author.

On his arrival in Sweden, whither he was in little haste to return, he renewed the same vows of fealty to the existing constitution; signed the articles of the Capitulation tendered by the States in the usual form, articles which left him the name of king and the shadow of royal authority; absolved the States and his subjects from their allegiance should he depart from his engagements, and menaced with his "utmost wrath all who should dare to propose a single degree of addition to the present power or splendour of the crown." At his Coronation, which was postponed to the next year, he volunteered an additional display of gratuitous hypocrisy and fraud, when, having taken the oaths to the constitution, he exclaimed, "Unhappy the king who wants the tie of oaths to secure himself on the throne, and, unable to reign in the hearts of his people, is forced to rule by legal constraint!"

Thus did this accomplished dissembler contrive, for above a year and a half, to keep up the appearance of a constitutional king, while in all his works and actions he affected the republican, and even overdid the part. At length his preparations being completed, he cast the mask away, excited an insurrection of troops in two distant fortresses to distract the senate's attention, and having gained over the regiments in the capital, secured the persons of the senators, assembled the other Estates in a hall surrounded with soldiery, and against which guns were planted and men stationed with lighted matches, while he dictated a new constitution, vesting absolute power in the crown, and annihilating the influence of both the nobility and the representatives of the people. This outrageous act of combined treachery and violence he concluded as he had begun with the mockery of oaths, and the most extravagant cant of piety. He swore to the new constitution; he invoked the Divine blessings on it in an hypocritical prayer; and he ended by ordering all present to sing a psalm, of which he gave out the first line and led the air. Certainly so gross an instance of sustained falsehood and fraud, in all its departments, was never either before or since exhibited by any even of the royal hypocrites who have at various times encroached, by stratagem and by perjury, upon the liberties of mankind.

It is fit that the history of this transaction should be set forth in its own hateful colours, because it both was at the time, and has been since, made the subject of great panegyric among the admirers of successful crime. Mankind will never be without oppressors as long as they act against their own best interests by conspiring against those of virtue, and make impostors of statesmen and tyrants of princes by transferring to success the praise that should be reserved for virtue, venerating fortune rather than prudence, and defrauding the wise and the good of their just applause, or suffering it to be

shared with the profligate and the daring. A premium is thus held out for unscrupulous violence and unprincipled fraud, when the failure of the worst and the best designs is alone and alike condemned, and the means by which success is achieved are lost sight of in the false lustre that surrounds it.

But tried by a far lower standard than that of public virtue, the conduct of Gustavus manifestly fails. If nothing can more betray a base disposition than his consummate hypocrisy, so nothing could more show a paltry mind than the practising his fraudulent pretences when they were wholly unnecessary for his purpose. He might have plotted the overthrow of the constitution just as safely and with quite as much chance of success had he accepted the constitution in the ordinary way, and signed the usual Capitulation as a matter of course. No one objected to his title; while his father yet lived he had been acknowledged the next heir; his succession was certain on his father's death; and if anything could have directed suspicion to his hidden designs, it was the pains he took, by his extravagant professions of zealous devotion to Liberty, to show that he was plotting against her. He had nothing to do but to plan his operations in secret, and in secret to obtain the support of the four or five regiments by which he effected his purpose. All his vile canting, both in the declaration of Paris, and in the speech on swearing to the constitution, was utterly useless; it only showed a petty understanding as well as a corrupt heart.

Truly he was a profligate man in every sense of the word. He delighted in cunning for cunning's sake. He preferred accomplishing his ends by trick, and the more tricky any course was, the more dexterous he thought his pursuit of it, and the better he liked it. His abilities were unquestionable, but they were on a paltry scale; his resolution was undoubted, but he was placed in circumstances which enabled him to avoid running any great risks; for nothing can be more unwieldy than a Senate of sixty or seventy persons as directing a military force; and the mob was for him and against them. That he showed great coolness through the whole affair is not denied. He quietly effected the Revolution on the 21st of August, and retired to a country seat twenty miles from Stockholm, Ekolsund, afterwards the property of a Scotch gentleman, named Seton, whom he ennobled. We have seen there a line or two written by him on the window-shutter, with the above date, and purporting that, "On this day, he had come there after the Revolution." When the supreme power was lodged in his own hands, although he maintained it without even a struggle, and afterwards still further extended it by a second breach of the constitution (which in 1772 he had as solemnly sworn to maintain, as he had the one which he then overthrew), yet there was nothing en-

larged or successful in his administration of public affairs, nothing in his policy which showed an enlightened or well-informed, any more than a liberal mind. Supporting an East India Company, and prohibiting the use of coffee under severe penalties to encourage their trade in tea, or prohibiting French brandy to protect the distillation of a very bad spirit from corn, were the greatest reach of his genius for economical improvements; while, by his military expenditure and his fraudulent tampering first with the coin and afterwards with the paper currency, which he issued in excess, he so reduced the standard, that soon after his death it was at a discount of nearly 50 per cent. below par. The bank paper kept its value; but with this he managed to interfere, and in a manner so scandalous that the history of royal profligacy presents no second example of anything so mean and base. An extensive forgery was committed in Hamburgh or Altona upon the Stockholm Bank by parties whom he employed and then gave up. The Bank having detected it in time was saved from ruin, though impoverished; and the agents in the infamous plot reaped the usual reward of those who suffer themselves to be made the instruments in the villanies of princes; they were punished because their principal was beyond the reach of the law, and they wandered abroad exiles for the rest of their days.

In his military capacity he showed talents of considerable extent, though, as in other respects, not of the first order. He was active, enterprising, prodigal of his person; but so little measuring his designs by his means, that he obtained for himself the reputation of being a restless prince rather than the fame of a considerable warrior; and so little equal to form great and happy and well-considered combinations, that he never went beyond daring and brilliant failures. The absolute influence of Russia under the Aristocratic government having been put an end to by the Revolution, ever after 1772 Catherine was plotting to regain her ascendant, or to obtain by force a still more undisputed sway over Swedish affairs. To all her intrigues Gustavus was alive, and often succeeded in counteracting them; to all her insidious proposals he was deaf, seeing through their real object, as when she would have inveigled him into a partition of Denmark, Norway to become Russian, and Jutland with the Islands Swedish, he made answer, that "She should not put her arm round his neck to strangle him." Indeed there can be little doubt that she only wished to draw him into a snare by obtaining his consent, that she might betray him to Denmark, and join with her in destroying him. When, therefore, the terms on which these two profligate Sovereigns were with each other had become as unfriendly as possible, and he found Russia engaged on the side of Turkey in a very difficult warfare, he seized the opportunity of attacking her, and sailed with a fleet up the gulf of Finland, so as to threaten Peters-

burg by his approach. His first operations were successful, though on a small scale, and in a degree far from decisive. A battle was then fought in circumstances so adverse to any such operation, that it seemed as much contrary to nature in a physical as in a moral view; for the channel was narrow, studded with islands, broken with rocks at every step, and defying all nautical skill to steer through unless with favouring weather, and without any other occupation than that of seamanship. Yet here did the hostile fleets engage for many hours, with immense slaughter on both sides, and so balanced a result, that each claimed the victory. The Russians, however, being greatly superior in numbers, kept the sea afterwards, and the Swedes retreated. An opposition in the Senate interposed new obstacles to Gustavus's projects, and he treated this with his wonted vigour. Appealing for support to the other orders, and then surrounding that refractory and disaffected body with troops on whose fidelity he could rely, he arrested five-and-thirty of them, and abolished the Senate by a sudden change of his own constitution, and a new violation of his most solemn engagements. His next campaign was thus freed from political embarrassment, but it was throughout disastrous. Defeated by sea, on shore he was still more unfortunate; his army, officers as well as men, refused to obey him; and he was reduced to the deplorable expedient, easily suggested by the rooted falseness of his nature, of amusing the people with fictitious accounts of his proceedings; but his fictions were so clumsy, that their self-contradictions betrayed their origin, and the honest Prince of Nassau was induced to complain formally of such a proceeding, bluntly and ineffectually reminding the monarch that such gross and apparent falsehoods were wholly unworthy a man who was always desirous of playing the warrior and the hero.

In these disastrous scenes, from the consequences of which Sweden did not recover for many years, and the effects of which long survived their author, it is admitted on all hands that his abilities were advantageously shown, but above all, that his courage was uniformly displayed in an eminent degree. It is doubtful if any capacity could have made up for the vast disparity of strength between the two parties who were thus matched in such unequal combat; but he often succeeded where an ordinary man would never have ventured; and although he could not be said to display first-rate talents for war, he yet had no reason to be ashamed of the part he played in its operations.

In private life his profligacy was of the grossest description; and with the same preposterous folly which made him prefer the most crooked paths in order to show his cunning, he thought that his grand object of civilising his dominions could be accomplished by patronising the introduction of foreign vices from other climates

among the hardy and sober children of the North. He was, however, a patron of the fine arts; greatly improved the architecture of his capital; established an opera on a respectable scale; and encouraged some excellent artists, of whom Sergel, the sculptor, was the most eminent.

His personal accomplishments were considerable; his information was much above that of ordinary princes; and though he never attempted so much as his uncle of Prussia, nor possessed equally the superficial kind of learning which that prince prided himself upon, he certainly wrote a great deal better, or rather less badly, and probably was not really his inferior in a literary point of view. His manners and address were extremely engaging, and he was greatly above the folly of standing on the dignity of his station, as his liberal, literary uncle, Frederic, always did; who, willing enough to pass for a wit among kings, was always ready enough to be a king among wits, so that when the wit was beaten in fair argument, he might call in the king to his assistance. Gustavus, though a far inferior person in other respects, was greatly above such mean vanity as this; ever showed sufficient confidence in his own resources to meet his company upon equal terms; and having once begun the discussion, by admitting them to the same footing with himself, scorned to change his ground or his character, and substitute authority for argument or for repartee. It was the observation of a man well versed in courts, and who had seen much of all the princes of his time,* that Gustavus III. was almost the only one of them who would have been reckoned a clever man in society had he been born a subject.

The same spirit which he showed in the field, and in his political measures, he displayed equally in the various attempts made upon his life. The arsenals and museums of Stockholm have several deadly instruments preserved in them, which were aimed at his person; and in no instance did he ever lose his presence of mind, or let the attempt be known, which by some extraordinary accident had failed. At last he fell by an assassin's hand. For some mysterious reason, apparently unconnected with political matters, an officer named Ankerstroem, not a noble or connected with the nobility, shot him in the back at a masquerade. The ground of quarrel apparently was personal: different accounts, some more discreditable to the monarch than others, are given of it; but nothing has been ascertained on sufficient evidence; and these are subjects upon which no public end is served by collecting or preserving conjectures. To dwell upon them rather degrades history into gossiping or tale-bearing, and neither explains men's motives, nor helps us to weigh more

* Sir Robert Liston.

accurately the merits of their conduct any more than to ascertain its springs.

The story of the fortunes of this prince presents no unimportant lesson to statesmen of the relative value of those gifts which they are wont most to prize, and the talents which they are fondest of cultivating. A useful moral may also be drawn from the tale of so many fine endowments being thrown away, and failing to earn an enduring renown, merely because they were unconnected with good principles, and unaccompanied by right feelings. The qualities which he possessed, or improved, or acquired, were those most calculated to strike the vulgar, and to gain the applause of the unreflecting multitude. Brave, determined, gifted as well with political courage as with personal valour, quick of apprehension, capable of application, patient of fatigue, well informed on general subjects, elegant, lively, and agreeable in society, affable, relying on his merits in conversation, and overbearing with his rank none that approached him—who so well fitted to win all hearts, if common popularity were his object, or to gain lasting fame if he had chosen to build upon such foundations a superstructure of glorious deeds? But not content with being prudent and politic, he must affect the power of being able to deceive all mankind; wise only by halves, he must mistake cunning for sagacity; perverted in his taste by vanity, he must prefer outwitting men by trickery to overcoming them by solid reason or by fair designs; preposterously thinking that the greater the treachery the deeper the policy, he must overlay all his schemes with surperfluous hypocrisy and dissimulation. Even his courage availed him little; because looking only to the outside of things, and provident only for the first step, he never profoundly formed his plans, nor ever thought of suiting his measures to his means. Thus in war he left the reputation only of failure and defeat; nor did the fame which he acquired by his successful political movements long outlive him, when men saw to how little account he was capable of turning the power which he had been fortunate enough to obtain by his bold and managing spirit. For many years men observing the contrast which he presented to other princes in his personal demeanour, and dazzled with the success of his political enterprises, lavished their admiration upon him with little stint, and less reflection; nor would they, had his dominions been more extensive, and his actions performed on a less confined theatre, have hesitated in bestowing upon him the title of "Great," with which they are wont to reward their worst enemies for their worst misdeeds, and to seduce sovereigns into the paths of tyranny and war. But he outlived the fame which he had early acquired. To his victories over the aristocracy at home succeeded his defeats by the enemy abroad. It was discovered that a prince may be more clever and accomplished than others, without

being more useful to his people, or more capable of performing great actions; and the wide difference between genius and ability was never more marked than in him. By degrees the eyes even of his contemporaries were opened to the truth; and then the vile arts of treachery, in which it was his unnatural pride to excel, became as hateful to men of sound principles as his preposterous relish for such bad distinction was disgustful to men of correct taste and right feelings. Of all his reputation, at one time sufficiently brilliant, not any vestige now remains conspicuous enough to tempt others into his crooked paths; and the recollections associated with his story, while they bring contempt upon his name, are only fitted to warn men against the shame that attends lost opportunities and prostituted talents.

THE EMPEROR JOSEPH.

A GREAT contrast in every respect to Gustavus III. was presented by another Prince who flourished in the same age, Joseph II. In almost all qualities, both of the understanding and the heart, he differed widely from his contemporary of the North. With abilities less shining though more solid, and which he had cultivated more diligently; with far more information acquired somewhat after the laborious German fashion; with so little love for trick or value for his own address, that he rather plumed himself on being a stranger to those arts, and on being defective in the ordinary provision of cunning which the deceitful atmosphere of courts renders almost necessary as a protection against circumvention; with ambition to excel, but not confined to love of military glory; with no particular wish to exalt his own authority, nor any indisposition to acquire fame by extending the happiness of his people—although presenting to the vulgar gaze a less striking object than Gustavus, he was in all important particulars a far more considerable person, and wanted but little from nature, though certainly much from fortune, to have left behind him a great and lasting reputation. That which he did want was, however, sufficient to destroy all chance of realising an eminent station among the lights of the world: for his judgment was defective; he was more restless than persevering; and though not at all wanting in powers of labour, yet he often thought of royal roads to his object, and leaving those steep and circuitous routes which nature has formed along the ascents, would fall into what has been termed by Lord Bacon, the paradox of power—desiring to attain the end without submitting to use the means. Success in such circumstances was hopeless; and accident contributed largely to multiply and exaggerate his failures, insomuch that the unhappy monarch on

his death-bed exclaimed in the anguish of his spirit, that his epitaph should be—" Here lies Joseph, who was unsuccessful in all his undertakings." Men looking to the event, rated him very far below his real value, and gave him credit for none of the abilities and few of the virtues which he really possessed. Nothing can be more unjust, more foolish in itself or more mischievous in its consequences, than the almost universal determination of the world to reckon nothing in a prince of any value but brilliant talents, and to account worth of little avail in that station in which it is of the most incalculable importance. Nay, let a royal life be ever so much disfigured with crime, if it have nothing mean, that is, if its vices be all on a great scale, and especially if it be covered with military successes, little of the reprobation due to its demerits will be expressed, as if the greatest of public enormities, the excesses of ambition, effected a composition for the worst private faults. Even our James I. is the object of contempt, not so much for the vile life he led as for his want of spirit and deficiency in warlike accomplishments; and, if the only one of his failings which was beneficial to his subjects had not existed in his public character, his name would have descended to us with general respect among the Harries and the Edwards of an earlier age.

It was in some degree unfortunate for the fame of Joseph that he came after so able and so celebrated a personage as his mother, Maria Theresa. But this circumstance also proved injurious to his education; for the Empress Queen was resolved that her son, even when clothed by the Election of the Germanic Diet with the Imperial title, should exercise none of its prerogatives during her life; and long after he had arrived at man's estate, he was held in a kind of tutelage by that bold and politic Princess. Having therefore finished his studies, and perceiving that at home he was destined to remain a mere cipher while she ruled, he went abroad, and travelled into those dominions in Italy nominally his own, but where he had no more concern with the government than the meanest of his subjects; and from thence he visited the rest of the Italian states. An eager, but an indiscriminate thirst of knowledge distinguished him wherever he went; there was no subject which he would not master, no kind of information which he would not amass; nor were any details too minute for him to collect. Nothing can be more praiseworthy than a sovereign thus acquainting himself thoroughly with the concerns of the people over whom he is called to rule; and the undistinguishing ardour of his studies can lead to little other harm than the losing time, or preventing the acquisition of important matters by distracting the attention to trifles. But his activity was as indiscriminate as his inquiries, and he both did some harm and exposed himself to much ridicule by the conduct which it prompted. He must needs visit the convents, and inspect the works of the nuns; nor rest satisfied until

he imposed on those whose needle moved less quickly than suited his notions of female industry, the task of making shirts for the soldiery. So his ambition was equally undistinguishing and unreflecting; nor did he consider that the things which it led him to imitate might well be void of all merit in him, though highly important in those whose example he was following to the letter, regardless of the spirit. Thus, because the Emperor of China encourages agriculture by driving, at some festival, a plough with the hand that holds at other times the celestial sceptre, the Emperor of Germany must needs plough a ridge in the Milanese, where of course a monument was erected to perpetuate this act of princely folly.

But of all his admirations, that which he entertained for the great enemy of his house, his mother, and his crown, was the most preposterous. During the Seven-years' war, which threatened the existence of all three, he would fain have served a campaign under Frederic II.; and although he might probably have had the decency to station himself on the northern frontier where Russia was the enemy, yet no one can wonder at the Empress Queen prohibiting her son from taking the recreation of high treason to amuse his leisure hours, and occupying his youth and exposing his person in shaking the throne which he was one day to fill. At length, however, the day arrived which he had so long eagerly panted for, when he was to become personally acquainted with the idol of his devotion. His inflexible parent had, in 1766, prevented them from meeting at Torgau; but three years after they had an interview of some days at Neiss in Silesia, the important province which Frederic had wrested from the Austrian crown. The veteran monarch has well conveyed an idea of his admirer in one of his historical works, which indeed contains very few sketches of equal merit:—"Il affectait une franchise qui lui semblait naturelle; son caractère aimable marquait de la gaieté jointe à la vivacité; mais avec le désir d'apprendre, il n'avait pas la patience de s'instruire." And certainly this impatience of the means, proportioned to an eagerness for the end, was the distinguishing feature of his whole character and conduct through life, from the most important to the most trivial of his various pursuits.

Although Frederic had a perfect right to look down upon Joseph in this view as well as in many others, and although there can be no sort of comparison between the two men in general, yet is it equally certain, that in one most important particular a close resemblance may be traced between them, and the same defect may be found marring the projects of both. Their internal administration was marked with the same intermeddling and controlling spirit, than which a more mischievous character cannot belong to any system of rule. It is indeed an error into which all sovereigns and all ministers are very apt to fall, when they avoid the opposite, perhaps safer,

extreme of indifference to their duties. Nor was he the more likely to steer a middle course, whose power had no limits; whose ideas of government were taken from the mechanical discipline of an army; and whose abilities so far exceeded the ordinary lot of royal understandings, that he seemed to have some grounds for thinking himself capable of every thing, while he despised the talents of every body else. Yet must it be allowed, that if all other proofs were wanting, this one undoubted imperfection in Frederic's nature is a sufficient ground for ranking him among inferior minds, and for denying him those higher qualities of the understanding which render such faculties beneficial, as he unquestionably possessed. A truly great genius will be the first to prescribe limits for its own exertions; to discover the sphere within which its powers must be concentrated in order to work, beyond which their diffusion can only uselessly dazzle. But this was a knowledge, and a self-command, that Frederic never attained. Though the ignorance and weakness which he displayed, in the excessive government of his kingdom, were thrown into the shade by his military glory, or partially covered by his cleverness and activity, they require only to be viewed apart, in order to excite as much ridicule as was ever bestowed on the Emperor Joseph, whose system of administration indeed greatly resembled his neighbour's, unless that he had more leisure to show his good intentions by his blunders, and was guided by better principles in the prosecution of his never-ending schemes. Like him, the Prussian ruler conceived that it was his duty to be eternally at work; to take every concern in his dominions upon his own shoulders; seldom to think men's interests safe when committed to themselves, much less to delegate to his ministers any portion of the superintending power, which must yet be every where present and constantly on the watch. Both of those princes knew enough of detail to give them a relish for affairs; but they were always wasting their exemplary activity in marring the concerns which belonged not to their department; and extending their knowledge of other people's trades, instead of forming an acquaintance with their own. While other monarchs were making a business of pleasure, they made a pleasure of business; but, utterly ignorant how much of their professional duties resolved into a wise choice of agents, with all their industry and wit, they were only mismanaging a part of the work, and leaving the rest undone; so that it may fairly be questioned whether their dominions would not have gained by the exchange, had their lives been squandered in the seraglio, and their affairs entrusted to cabinets of more quiet persons with more ordinary understandings.

But although these two eminent men were equally fond of planning and regulating, as they indulged their propensity in different circumstances, so their schemes were not pursued in the same

manner, and have certainly been attended with different results. Joseph was a legislator and a projector. From the restlessness of his spirit, and the want of pressing affairs to employ his portion of talent, his measures were often rather busy and needless, than seriously hurtful; and as the conception of a plan resulted from his activity and idleness, he was still vacant and restless after the steps had been taken for its execution, and generally strangled it by his impatience to witness the fruits of his wisdom; like the child who plants a bean, and plucks it up when it has scarcely sprouted, to see how it is growing. Thus it happened, that many of his innovations were done away by himself, while others had no tendency to operate any change. Those which were opposed, he only pushed to a certain length, and then knew how to yield, after mischief had been done by the struggle; but few of them survived his own day; chiefly such as anticipated by a slight advance, the natural course of events. Frederic, on the other hand, was not placed in easy circumstances; he was active from necessity, as much as from vanity; he was an adventurer, whose projects must be turned to some account; not an idle amateur, who can amuse himself with forming a new scheme after the others have failed. Although, then, like Joseph, he could afford his designs little time to ripen, yet he contrived to force something out of them by new applications of power; thus bringing to a premature conclusion operations in their own nature violent and untimely. Hence his necessities, like his rival's idle impatience, allowed his plans no chance of coming to perfection; but while Joseph destroyed the scheme of yesterday to make a new one, Frederic carried it forcibly into an imperfect execution before it was well laid. Add to this, that the power of the latter being more absolute, and of a description the best adapted for enforcing detailed commands, he was better enabled to carry through his regulating and interfering plans against whatever opposition they might encounter, while his superior firmness of character, and his freedom from the various checks which principle or feeling imposed upon the Austrian monarch, precluded all escape from the rigour of his administration by any other than fraudulent means. Thus, the consequences of his too much governing, of his miserable views in finance, and of his constant errors in the principles of commercial legislation, are to be traced at this day through the various departments of the Prussian states. Nor can it be asserted in the present instance, that the powers of individual interest have sufficed to produce their natural effects upon human industry in spite of the shackles by which it has been fettered and cramped.

The intercourse between these two sovereigns which took place at Neiss, in 1769, was not their only meeting; they had another the year after at Neustadt; and here, if ever, the remark of Voltaire

proved correct, "that the meetings of sovereigns are perilous to their subjects;" for here was arranged that execrable crime against the rights of men and of nations, which has covered the memory of its perpetrators with incomparably less infamy than they deserved, the Partition of Poland. Although Joseph's mother was still alive and suffered him to share none of her authority, yet this negociation, in which he undeniably was engaged, deprives him of all pretext for withdrawing from his portion of the disgrace which so justly covers the parties to that foul transaction.

It is certain, however, and it is a melancholy truth, that this abominable enterprise is the only one of all the Emperor's undertakings that ever succeeded. His less guilty attempt in Belgium, his harmless changes in Austria, his projects of useful reform in Italy, all failed and failed signally, for the most part through the careless and unreflecting manner in which he formed his plans, and his want of patience in allowing time for their execution. His absurd fancy of being crowned King of Hungary at Vienna, instead of Presburg, and transporting the regalia out of the country, without the possibility of effecting any good purpose, offended the national pride of the Hungarians, and roused their suspicions of further designs against their rights to such a pitch, that for the rest of his reign he had to encounter the opposition of those upon whose protection his mother had thrown herself in her extremity, and who had sworn "To die for their King Maria Theresa." His Flemish reforms, and indeed his attempts upon the liberties of the Flemings, ended in exciting an open rebellion, which convulsed the Netherlands at the time of his death. In a far nobler object his steadiness failed as usual, and his ill-digested and rash innovations rather confirmed than extirpated the evil he wished to destroy. He designed to suppress the Monasteries, to prevent Appeals to Rome, and to retain the power of Ordination and Deprivation within the country. But he proceeded in so inconsiderate a manner as to raise universal alarm among all classes of the Clergy, and even to make the Pope undertake a journey from Rome with the view of turning him aside from his projects, by showing their dangerous consequences. A courteous reception was all the Sovereign Pontiff received; and after his return to Italy, the Emperor rashly abolished the Diocesan Seminaries, reserving only five or six for the whole of his vast dominions; new modelled the limits of the dioceses, and altered the whole law of marriage, granting, for the first time in a Catholic country, the liberty of divorce. He removed at the same time the images from the churches, to show that he could, in trifling as well as graver matters, pursue the course of premature innovation, and that he was ignorant of the great rule of practical wisdom in government, which forbids us to hurt strong and general feelings where no adequate purpose is to be served, how trifling or absurd soever the subject

matter may be to which those feelings relate. The removal of images, however, was far from the most trifling of the details into which he thrust his improving hand. He wearied out the clergy as well as their flocks with innumerable regulations touching fasts, processions, ceremonies of the Church, everything, as has been well observed, with which the civil power has the least right to meddle, and it might be added, everything the most beneath a Sovereign's regards: so that Frederic used not unhappily to speak of him as his "brother the Sexton" (*mon frère le Sacristain*). Every one knows how such freaks of power, the growth of a little mind, torment and irritate their objects even more than they lower the reputation and weaken the authority of their authors.

Having formerly, with a restlessness so foolish as in his position almost to be criminal, chosen the moment of the whole of his people being flung into consternation by his measures, as the fittest opportunity for going abroad upon a tour through France, where he passed some months in envying all he saw, and being mortified by its superiority to his own possessions, novelty being no cause of this journey, for he had been all over that fine country four years before—so now, after having refused the Pope's request and proceeded still more rapidly in his ecclesiastical changes since the pontifical visit, he chose to return it immediately after he had given this offence; and he passed his time at Rome in vainly endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of Spain with his project for entirely throwing off all allegiance to the Holy See. A few years after, this wandering Emperor repaired to Russia and accompanied Catherine on her progress through the southern parts of her empire. Here he met with a sovereign who resembled him in one point and no more; she was devoured by the same restless passion for celebrity, and in her domestic administration undertook everything to finish nothing, how effectively soever she might accomplish the worser objects of her criminal ambition abroad. A witty remark of his connected with this weakness, is recorded, and proves sufficiently that he could mark in another what he was unable to correct in himself. She had laid the first stone of a city, to be called by her name, and she requested him to lay the second. "I have begun and finished," said he, "a great work with the Empress. She laid the first stone of a city and I laid the last, all in one day."

His excessive admiration of Frederic, combined with his thirst of military glory, in the war of the Bavarian succession 1778, had the effect of neutralising each other. He preferred corresponding to fighting with his adversary, who called it a campaign of the pen. Under the mediation of France peace was speedily restored, after an active and vigorous interchange of letters for some months, and with no other result. But the war with the Turks, into which Catherine inveigled him, was of a very different character. With them no

written compositions could produce any effect; and a series of disasters ensued, which ended in the enemy menacing Vienna itself, after overrunning all Lower Hungary. It was in vain that he endeavoured to rally his defeated troops, or win back victory to his standard by the most indiscriminate severity; cashiering officers by the platoon, and shooting men by the regiment, until at length old marshal Laudohn came forth from his retirement, and the men, animated by the sight of their ancient chief, repulsed the enemy, and forced Belgrade to capitulate without a siege. At this critical moment, and ere yet he could taste the pleasure, to him so novel, of success, death closed his eyes upon the ruin of his affairs in Belgium, their inextricable embarrassment at home, the death of a sister-in-law (first wife of Leopold), to whom he was tenderly attached, and the unwonted, perhaps unexpected, gleam of prosperity in the Turkish campaign. He died in the flower of his age, and almost at the summit of the confusion created by his restless folly, a sad instance how much mischief a prince may do to others, and how great vexation inflict upon himself, by attempting in mediocrity of resources things which only a great capacity can hope to execute.

The volume which records the transactions of statesmen, often suggests the remark that the success of mediocrity, both in public and in private life, affords a valuable lesson to the world, a lesson the more extensively useful, because the example is calculated to operate upon a far more enlarged scale than the feats of rare endowments. In private individuals, moderate talents, however misused by disproportioned ambition, can produce little harm, except in exposing the folly and presumption of their possessors. But in princes, moderate talents, unaccompanied with discretion and modesty, are calculated to spread the greatest misery over whole nations. The pursuit of renown, when confined to maladministration at home, is extremely mischievous; leading to restless love of change for change's sake, attempts to acquire celebrity by undertakings which are above the reach of him who makes them, and which involve the community in the consequences of their failure. But the fear always is, that this restless temper, unsustained by adequate capacity, may lead to indulging in the Great Sport of Kings, and that wars, even when successful most hurtful to the state, will be waged, without any fair chance of avoiding discomfiture and disgrace. Hence a greater curse can hardly light upon any people than to be governed by a prince in whom disproportioned ambition, or preposterous vanity, is only supported by the moderate talents which, united to sound principles, and under the control of a modest nature, might constitute their safety and their happiness. For it is altogether undeniable that, considering the common failings of princes, the necessary defects of their education, the inevitable tendency of their station to

engender habits of self-indulgence, and the proneness which they all feel, when gifted with a superior capacity, to seek dominion or fame by martial deeds, there is far more safety in nations being ruled by sovereigns of humble talents, if these are only accompanied with an ambition proportionably moderate.

THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

The two male conspirators against the liberties of mankind, the rights of nations, the peace of the world, have now been painted, but in colours far more subdued than the natural hues of their crime. It remains that the most profligate of the three should be pourtrayed, and she a woman!—but a woman in whom the lust of power, united with the more vulgar profligacy of our kind, had effaced all traces of the softer nature that marks the sex, and left an image of commanding talents and prodigious firmness of soul, the capacities which constitute a great character, blended with unrelenting fierceness of disposition, unscrupulous proneness to fraud, unrestrained indulgence of the passions, all the weakness and all the wickedness which can debase the worst of the human race.

The Princess Sophia of Anhalt Zerbst, one of the smallest of the petty principalities in which Northern Germany abounds, was married to Peter III., nephew and heir-presumptive to the Russian crown, and she took the name of Catherine, according to the custom of that barbarous nation. The profligacy of Elizabeth, then on the throne of the Czars, was little repugnant to the crapulous life which her future successor led, or to his consort following their joint example. The young bride, accordingly, soon fell into the debauched habits of the court, and she improved upon them; for having more than once changed the accomplices of her adulterous indulgences, almost as swiftly as Elizabeth did, she had her husband murdered by her paramour, that is, the person for the time holding the office of paramour; and having gained over the guards and the mob of Petersburg, she usurped the crown to which she could pretend no earthly title. To refute the reports that were current, and to satisfy all inquiries as to the cause of Peter's death, she ordered his body to be exposed to public view, and stationed guards to prevent any one from approaching near enough to see the livid hue which the process of strangling had spread over his features.

The reign thus happily begun, was continued in the constant practice of debauchery and the occasional commission of convenient murder. Lover after lover was admitted to the embraces of the Messalina of the North, until soldiers of the guards were employed in

fatiguing an appetite which could not be satiated. Sometimes the favourite of the day would be raised to the confidence and the influence of prime minister; but after a while he ceased to please as the paramour, though he retained his ministerial functions. One of the princes of the blood having been pitched on by a party to be their leader, was thrown into prison; and when the zeal of that party put forward pretences to the throne on his behalf, the imperial Jezebel had him murdered in his dungeon as the shortest way of terminating all controversy on his account, and all uneasiness. The mediocrity of her son Paul's talents gave her no umbrage, especially joined to the eccentricity of his nature, and his life was spared. Had he given his tigress mother a moment's alarm, he would speedily have followed his unhappy father to the regions where profligacy and parricide are unknown.

Although Catherine was thus abandoned in all her indulgences and unscrupulous in choosing the means of gratifying her ambition especially, yet did she not give herself up to either the one kind of vice or the other, either to cruelty or to lust, with the weakness which in little minds lends those abominable propensities an entire and undivided control. Her lovers never were her rulers; her licentiousness interfered not with her public conduct: her cruelties were not numerous and wanton; not the result of caprice or the occupation of a wicked and malignant nature, but the expedients, the unjustifiable, the detestable expedients, to which she had recourse when a great end was to be attained. The historian who would fully record the life of the Czarina, must deform his page with profligacy and with crimes that resemble the disgusting annals of the Cæsars; but the blot would be occasional only and the darkness confined to a few pages, instead of blackening the whole volume, as it does that of Tacitus or Suetonius; for she had far too great a mind to be enslaved by her passions or merely mischievous in her feelings, although the gusts of the one carried her away, and what of the other was amiable, had far too little force to resist the thirst for dominion, which, with the love of indulgence, formed the governing motive of her conduct.

Her capacity was of an exalted order. Her judgment was clear and sure; her apprehension extraordinarily quick; her sagacity penetrating; her providence and circumspection comprehensive. To fear, hesitation, vacillation, she was an utter stranger; and the adoption of a design was with her its instant execution. But her plans differed widely from those of her companion Joseph II., or even of her neighbour Gustavus III. They resembled far more those of her long-headed accomplice of Prussia. They were deeply laid in general, and for the most part well digested; formed as to their object with no regard to principle, but only to her aggrandisement and

glory; framed as to their execution with no regard to the rights, or mercy for the sufferings of her fellow-creatures. Over their execution the same dauntless, reckless, heartless feelings presided; nor was she ever to be turned from her purpose by difficulties and perils, or abated in her desire of success by languor and delay, or quelled in her course by the least remnant of the humane feelings that mark the softer sex, extinct in her bold, masculine, and flinty bosom.

In one material particular, and in only one, she seemed to betray her original womanhood, and ceased to pursue the substance after she had gone far enough to gratify her vanity with the shadow of outward appearances, and to tickle her ears with popular applause. Her military operations on the side of the East; her attempts at encroachment upon Turkey, whether by skilful negotiations with the Greek chiefs, or warlike movements almost decisively successful against Constantinople;* her measures in concert with Denmark against Sweden, and which only the interposition of England at Copenhagen, in 1788, † prevented from putting Finland in her possession; her share in the execrable Partition of Poland, from the beginning of that crime down to its consummation in 1794—all these schemes of over vigorous and daring policy formed a strange contrast with those ebullitions of childish vanity, which laid the foundation of cities in a desert, never to be finished nor ever built above the corner-stone; or assembled upon her route through the wastes of her empire thousands of half-naked savages and clothed them with dresses to be transported in the night and serve the next day's show, while she was making a progress through her barren, unpeopled domains; or made the shells of houses be raised one week, along the road where she was to pass, destined the week after to tumble in premature but inevitable ruins; or collected groups of peasants where none could subsist, and had these same groups carried on in the night to greet her next day with another false semblance of an impossible population in another waste. Nor was there much more reality in her councils of lawgivers to prepare a Code for her vast empire, and her Instructions, supposed to be written by herself, for guiding their deliberations and assisting their labours. But then she had resolved to be the Semiramis of the North; she must both be the Conqueror of Empires, the Founder of Cities, and the Giver of Laws. But as it was incomparably more easy for an absolute sovereign at the head of forty millions of slave subjects, with a vast, impregnable, almost unapproachable dominion, if ruled by no principles to subdue other countries, than to improve her own, and to

* Had her admirals pushed their advantages at Tchesme, the Porte was laid prostrate at her feet.

† Our ambassador threatened to bombard Copenhagen with an English fleet, unless the Danes instantly raised the siege of Gottenburgh.

extend the numbers of her vassals, than to increase their happiness or their civilisation, she failed in all the more harmless, or beneficent parts of her schemes, while she unhappily succeeded in many of her warlike and unprincipled projects; and she easily rested satisfied with the name of civil wisdom, and the mere outward semblance of plans for internal improvement, while she enjoyed the sad reality of territorial aggrandizement through cruelty and violence. The court she paid to men of letters obtained a prompt repayment in flattery; and they lavished upon her never-ending, never-executed plans of administration, the praises to which a persevering and successful execution of them would alone have given her a title. Pleased, satisfied with these sounds, she thought no more of the matter, and her name has come down to our times, though close adjoining her own, stript of every title to respect for excellence in any one department of civil wisdom, while her unprincipled policy in foreign affairs has survived her and still afflicts mankind.

A woman of her commanding talents, however, had other holds over the favour of literary men than the patronage which her station enabled her to dispense. Besides maintaining a kind of literary envoy at Paris in the person of Grimm, she invited Diderot to St. Petersburg, and purchased d'Alembert's library; patronised the illustrious Euler, and gratified others of less fame by admitting them to the familiar society of a great monarch; but she also had abilities and information enough to relish their conversation, and to bear her part in it upon nearly equal terms. She had the manly sense, too, so far superior to the demeanour of Frederic and the other spoilt children of royal nurseries, that no breach of etiquette, no unbecoming familiarity of her lettered guests, ever offended her pride, or roused her official dignity for an instant. Diderot used to go so far in the heat of argument as to slap her on the shoulder or knee with the "*emportement*" of a French "*savant*," and he only excited a smile in the well-natured and truly superior person whose rank and even sex he had for the moment forgotten. Her writings, too, are by no means despicable; but the difficulty of ascertaining that any work published by an Empress-regnant proceeds from her own pen deprives criticism of all interest as connected with her literary reputation. The most important of her books, indeed, her "Instructions to the Commission for composing a Code of Laws," published in 1770, makes little or no pretension to originality, as whatever it has of value is closely copied from the work of Beccaria. The great variety of her subjects is calculated to augment our suspicions that she made books as she made war, by deputy—by orders from head-quarters. Legislation, history, travels, criticism, dramatic pieces of various kinds, political and moral romances—all pass under her name as the occupation of her leisure hours and the fruits of her prolific pen.

It would be unjust, however, to deny that science owes her important obligations. Her patronage of the Academy of Petersburg was unremitting, and it was unaccompanied by undue interference, the great drawback on all public patronage of letters or literary men, which so often more than balances the benefits it is calculated to bestow. Flourishing under her auspices, it gave to the world some of the most valuable of Euler's profound and original researches. The journeys of Pallas and Gmelin were directed and supported by her, and they explored the hitherto unknown regions of the Caucasus, ascertained their resources, and described their productions. Dispatched by her orders, Billings explored the Eastern, and Blumager the Northern Ocean. Nor were some beginnings wanting under her reign to establish schools for teaching the more elementary branches of knowledge to her untutored people.*

Beside these worthy and useful works, she made some little improvements upon the judicial and financial administration of her empire, and corrected a very few of the more flagrant abuses, the produce of a darker age, which even in Russia could hardly stand their ground amidst the light of the eighteenth century. But the fragments of her reforming or improving schemes which alone have remained behind her, bear the most inconsiderable proportion to the bulk of the designs themselves; and of all the towns she began to build, the canals she planned, the colonies she planted, the manufactories she established, the legislation she chalked out, the thousand-and-one institutions of charity, of learning, of industry, she founded, the very names have perished, and the situations been buried in oblivion, leaving only the reputation to their author of realising Joseph's just though severe picture, of a "Sovereign who began everything and finished nothing."

On the whole, the history of Princes affords few examples of such talents and such force of character on a throne so diverted from all good purposes, and perverted to the working of so much mischief. There have been few abler monarchs in any part of the world. It may well be doubted if there has been one as bad in all the important particulars in which the worth or the wickedness of rulers tells the most powerfully upon the happiness of the world.

The accidental circumstance of sex has sometimes led to instituting comparisons of Catherine with our Elizabeth; but the points of resemblance were few. Both possessed a very strong, masculine understanding; both joined to comprehensive views, the firm resolution without which nothing great is ever achieved; both united a vehement love of power with a determination never to brook their

* The attention paid to education at the present day in Russia is truly praiseworthy; and might make nations ashamed that pretend to far greater civility and refinement.

authority being questioned; and both were prepared, though in very different degrees, to sacrifice unscrupulously those whom they regarded as obstacles in the way of its gratification. Whether Elizabeth in the place of Catherine might not have become more daring, and throwing off all the restraints imposed by the Ecclesiastical and Parliamentary Constitution of her country, have attained by open force those ends which she was obliged to compass by intrigue, is a matter of more doubtful consideration. Certainly her reign is sullied by none of those atrocious crimes which cast so dark a shade on the memory of Catherine; nor can any comparison be fairly made between the act which approaches nearest the enormities of the Northern Tyrant, and even the least of those mighty transgressions.

The passions that most influence the sex, present remarkable points both of contrast and of resemblance in the kind of empire which they exercised over these great sovereigns. The one was the victim of sensual propensities, over which she exercised no kind of control: the other carefully avoided every appearance of such excesses. So differently were they constituted, morally as well as physically, that it is more than doubtful if Catherine ever felt the passion of love, or Elizabeth that of sex, while the latter was in love with some favourite or other all her life, and the existence of the former was a succession of the grossest amours. But in this both pursued the same course, that the favourite of the woman in neither case ever obtained any sway over the Queen; and that the sensual appetites of the one and the tender sentiments of the other were alike indulged, without for a moment breaking in upon the scheme of their political life.

Their accession to the thrones of their respective kingdoms was marked by very different circumstances; the one succeeding by inheritance without a possible objection to her right, the other usurping the crown without the shadow of any title at all. Yet the sovereign whose title was indisputable had far more perils and difficulties to encounter in defending her possession, than she who claimed by mere force in contempt of all right. The religious differences which marshalled the English people in two bitterly hostile divisions, kept Elizabeth in constant anxiety during her whole reign, lest the disinclination of one class proving stronger against her than the favour of the other in her behalf, attempts upon her life or her authority might subvert a throne founded upon every ground of law, and fortified by many years of possession. Catherine had no sooner seized upon the crown of the Czars than all her difficulties vanished, and once only or twice, during her reign of between thirty and forty years, was she ever molested by any threats of a competition for her crown. It is due to the Englishwoman, that her admirable firmness and clemency combined should be recorded in these untoward cir-

cumstances. No alarm for her own safety urged her to adopt any cruel expedients, or to consult her security by unlawful means; nor did she ever but once seek a justification of lawless conduct in the extraordinary difficulties and even dangers of her position. Catherine, who had walked to supreme power over her husband's corpse, easily defended her sceptre by the same instruments which had enabled her to grasp it. The single instance in which Elizabeth shed a rival's blood for her own safety, admitted of extenuation, if it could not be justified, by the conspiracy detected against her life; and the times she lived in, rendering assassination perilous, instead of murdering her rival in a dungeon, she at least brought her charges openly into a court of inquiry, and had her tried, judged, executed, under colour of law before the face of the world.

In one thing, and in one alone, the inferiority of the Englishwoman to the German must be admitted; and this arose from the different circumstances of the two Sovereigns, and the feebler authority with which the former was invested. Through her whole reign she was a dissembler, a pretender, a hypocrite. Whether in steering her crooked way between rival sects, or in accommodating herself to conflicting factions, or in pursuing the course she had resolved to follow amidst the various opinions of the people, she ever displayed a degree of cunning and faithlessness which it is impossible to contemplate without disgust. But if there be any one passage of her life which calls forth this sentiment more than another, it is her vile conduct respecting the execution of Mary Stuart—her hateful duplicity, her execrable treachery towards the instruments she used and sacrificed, her cowardly skulking behind those instruments to escape the censures of the world. This was the crowning act of a whole life of despicable fraud and hypocrisy; and, from the necessity of resorting to this, Catherine's more absolute power set her free: not that the Empress's history is unaccompanied with traits of a like kind. When her troops had sacked the suburbs of Warsaw, and consummated the partition of Poland by the butchery of thousands of her victims, she had the blasphemous effrontery to celebrate a *Te Deum* in the metropolitan cathedral, and to promulgate an address to the people, professing "to cherish for them the tender feelings of a mother towards her offspring." It vexes the faith of pious men to witness scenes like these, and not see the fires of Heaven descend to smite the guilty and impious actors.

In the whole conduct of their respective governments it would be hard to find a greater contrast than is exhibited by these two famous princesses. While Catherine sacrificed everything to outward show in her domestic administration, Elizabeth looked ever and only to the substance; the former caring nothing how her people fared or her realms were administered, so she had the appearance of splendour

and filled the world with her name; the latter, intent upon the greatest service which a sovereign in her circumstances could perform, the allaying the religious dissensions that distracted all classes of her subjects, and maintaining her crown independent of all foreign dictation. Assuming the sceptre over a barbarous people scattered through a boundless desert, Catherine found the most formidable obstacles opposed by nature to what was obviously prescribed by the circumstance of her position as her first duty, the diffusing among her rude subjects the blessings of civilization; but desirous only of the fame which could be reaped from sudden operations, and impatient of the slow progress by which natural improvement must ever proceed, she overcame not those obstacles, and left her country in the state in which it would have been whoever had filled her place. Succeeding to the throne of a nation torn by faction, and ruled by a priesthood at once tyrannical and intolerant, Elizabeth, by wise forbearance, united to perfect steadiness of purpose, by a judicious use of her influence wheresoever her eye, incessantly watchful, perceived that her interposition could help the right cause, above all, by teaching each sect that she would be the servant of none while disposed to be the friend of all, and would lend her support to that faith which her conscience approved, without suffering its professors to oppress those of rival creeds, left her country in a state of peace at home as remarkable and as beneficial as the respect which her commanding talents and determined conduct imposed on foreign nations.

The aggrandizement of the Russian empire during Catherine's time, at once the monument of her worst crimes and the source of the influence ever since exerted by her successors over the affairs of Europe, has been felt by all the other powers as the just punishment of their folly in permitting Poland to be despoiled, and by none more than those who were the accomplices in that foul transaction. It is almost the only part of her administration that remains to signalise her reign; but as long as mankind persist in preferring for the subject of their eulogies mighty feats of power, to useful and virtuous policy, the Empress Catherine's name will be commemorated as synonymous with greatness. The services of Elizabeth to her people are of a far higher order; it is probable that they owe to her the maintenance of their national independence; and it is a large increase of the debt of gratitude thus incurred to this great princess, that ruling for half a century of troublous times, she ruled in almost uninterrupted peace, while by the vigour of her councils, and the firmness of her masculine spirit, she caused the alliance of England to be courted, and her name feared by all surrounding nations.

If, finally, we apply to these two Sovereigns the surest test of genius and the best measure of success in their exalted station—the comparative merits of the men by whom they were served—the German

sinks into insignificance, while the Englishwoman shines with surpassing lustre. Among the ministers who served Catherine, it would be difficult to name one of whom the lapse of forty years has left any remembrance; but as Elizabeth never had a man of inferior, hardly one of middling capacity, in her service, so to this day, at the distance of between two and three centuries, when any one would refer to the greatest statesmen in the history of England, he turns instinctively to the Good Times of the Virgin Queen.

GEORGE IV.

It would not be easy to find a greater contrast in the character and habits of two princes succeeding one another in any country, than the two last Georges presented to the eye of even the most superficial observer.

George Prince of Wales had been educated after the manner of all princes whose school is the palace of their ancestors, whose teacher is boundless prosperity, whose earliest and most cherished associate is unrestrained self-indulgence, and who neither among their companions form the acquaintance of any equal, nor in the discipline of the seminary ever taste of control. The regal system of tuition is indeed curiously suited to its purpose of fashioning men's minds to the task of governing their fellow-creatures—of training up a naturally erring and sinful creature to occupy the most arduous of all human stations, the one most requiring habits of self-command, and for duly filling which, all the instruction that man can receive, and all the virtue his nature is capable of practising, would form a very inadequate qualification. This system had, upon the Prince of Wales, produced its natural effects in an unusually ample measure. He seemed, indeed, to come forth from the school a finished specimen of its capabilities and its powers; as if to show how much havoc can be made in a character originally deficient in none of the good and few of the great qualities, with which it may be supposed that men are born. Naturally of a temper by no means sour or revengeful, he had become selfish to a degree so extravagant, that he seemed to act upon a practical conviction of all mankind being born for his exclusive use; and hence he became irritable on the least incident that thwarted his wishes; nay, seemed to consider himself injured, and thus entitled to gratify his resentment, as often as any one, even from a due regard to his own duty or his own character, acted in a way to disappoint his expectations or ruffle his repose.

His natural abilities, too, were far above mediocrity; he was quick,

lively, gifted with a retentive memory, and even with a ready wit—endowed with an exquisite ear for music, and a justness of eye, that fitted him to attain refined taste in the arts—possessing, too, a nice sense of the ludicrous, which made his relish for humour sufficiently acute, and bestowed upon him the powers of an accomplished mimic. The graces of his person and his manners need not be noted, for neither are valuable but as the adjunct of higher qualities; and the latter, graceful manners, are hardly to be avoided by one occupying all his life that first station which, by removing constraint, makes the movements of the prince as naturally graceful as those of the infant or the child too young to feel embarrassment. But of what avail are all natural endowments without cultivation? They can yield no more fruit than a seed or a graft cast out upon a marble floor; and cultivation, which implies labour, discipline, self-control, submission to others, can scarcely ever be applied to the Royal condition. They who believe that they are exempt from the toils, and hardly liable to the casualties of other mortals—all whose associates, and most of whose instructors, set themselves about confirming this faith—are little likely to waste the midnight oil in any contemplations but those of the debauchee; and beings, who can hardly bring themselves to believe that they are subject to the common fate of humanity, are pretty certain to own no inferior control. "Quoi donc" (exclaimed the young Dauphin to his Right Reverend preceptor, when some book mentioned a king as having died)—"Quoi donc, les Rois meurent-ils?" "Quelquefois, Monseigneur," was the cautious and courtly reply. That this Prince should afterwards grow, in the natural course of things, into Louis XV., and that his infant aptitude for the habits of royalty thus trained up should expand into the maturity of self-indulgence, which almost proved too great a trial of French loyal patience, is not matter of wonder. Our Louis, notwithstanding the lessons of Dean Jackson, and the fellowship of Thurlow and Sheridan, was a man of very uncultivated mind—ignorant of all but the passages of history which most princes read, with some superficial knowledge of the dead languages, which he had imperfectly learnt and scantily retained, considerable musical skill, great facility of modern tongues, and no idea whatever of the rudiments of any science, natural or moral; unless the very imperfect notions of the structure of government, picked up in conversation or studied in newspapers, can be reckoned any exception to the universal blank.

We have said nothing of the great quality of all,—the test of character,—firmness, and her sister truth. That the Prince was a man of firm mind, not even his most unscrupulous flatterers ever could summon up the courage to pretend. He was much the creature of impulses, and the sport of feelings naturally good and kind; but had

become wholly selfish through unlimited indulgence. Those who knew him well were wont to say that his was a woman's character, when they observed how little self-command he had, and how easily he gave way to the influence of petty sentiments. Nor was the remark more gallant towards the sex than it was respectful towards the Prince; inasmuch as the character of a woman transferred to the other sex implies the want of those qualities which constitute manly virtue, without the possession of the charms by which female weaknesses are redeemed; independently of the fact that those weaker parts are less prejudicial in the woman, because they are more in harmony with the whole. That they who draw the breath of life in a Court, and pass all their days in an atmosphere of lies, should have any very sacred regard for truth is hardly to be expected. They experience such falsehood in all who surround them, that deception, at least suppression of the truth, almost seems necessary for self-defence; and accordingly, if their speech be not framed upon the theory of the French Cardinal, that language was given to man for the better concealment of his thoughts, they at least seem to regard in what they say, not its resemblance to the fact in question, but rather its subserviency to the purpose in view.

The course of private conduct which one in such a station, of such habits, and of such a disposition, might naturally be expected to run, was that of the Prince from his early youth upwards; and when he entered upon public life, he was found to have exhausted the resources of a career of pleasure; to have gained followers without making friends; to have acquired much envy and some admiration among the unthinking multitude of polished society; but not, in any quarter, either to command respect or conciliate esteem. The line of political conduct which he should pursue was chalked out by the relative position in which he stood to his father, and still more by that monarch's character, in almost all respects the reverse of his own.

It thus happened that the Whig party, being the enemies of George III., found favour in the sight of his son, and became his natural allies. In the scramble for power they highly valued such an auxiliary, and many of them were received also into the personal favour of their illustrious political recruit. But state affairs were by him only taken as a stimulant, to rouse the dormant appetite, when more vulgar excitement had fatigued the jaded sense; and it would be extremely difficult to name the single occasion on which any part was taken by him whom the Whigs held out as the most exalted member of their body, from the end of the American war until the beginning of the contest with France. An event then occurred which brought his Royal Highness upon the stage, but not as a friend of the Liberal party. He came forward to disclaim them, to avow that his sentiments differed widely from theirs, and to declare that upon

the great question which divided the world, he took part with the enemies of liberty and of improvement. The French Revolution had alarmed him in common with most of his order; he quitted the party for many years; he gave the only support he had to give, his vote, to their adversaries. The rest of his political history is soon told. When the alarm had subsided he gradually came back to the Opposition party, and acted with them until his father's illness called him to the Regency, when he shamefully abandoned them, flung himself into the hands of their antagonists, and continued to the end of his days their enemy, with a relentless bitterness, a rancorous malignity, which betokened the spite of his nature, and his consciousness of having injured and betrayed those whom, therefore, he never could forgive. It was indeed the singular and unenviable fate of this Prince, that he who at various times had more "troops of friends" to surround him than any man of any age, changed them so often, and treated them so ill, as to survive, during a short part of his life, every one of his attachments, and to find himself before its close in the hands of his enemies, or of mere strangers, the accidental connexions of yesterday.

After running the course of dissipation, uninterrupted by any more rational or worthy pursuit,—prematurely exhausting the resources of indulgence, both animal and mental, and becoming incapable of receiving further gratification unless the wish of the ancient tyrant could be gratified by the invention of some new pleasure,—it was found that a life of what was called unbounded profusion could not be passed without unlimited extravagance, and that such enormous sums had been squandered in a few years as seemed to baffle conjecture how the money could have been spent. The bill was of course brought in to the country, and one of the items which swelled the total amount to above half a million, was many hundreds of pounds for Marechal powder, a perfumed brown dust with which the fops of those days filled their hair, in preference to using soap and water, after the manner of the less courtly times that succeeded the French Revolution. The discontent which this unprincipled and senseless waste of money occasioned had no effect in mending the life of its author; and in a few years after a new debt had been incurred, and the aid of Parliament was required again. There seemed now no chance but one of extricating the Prince from the difficulties with which he had surrounded himself, and obtaining such an increased income as might enable him to continue his extravagance without contracting new debts. That chance was his consenting to marry; in order that the event might take place, so pleasing to a people whom all the vices and the follies of royalty can never wean from their love of Princes, and the increase of the royal family be effected with due regularity of procedure from the heir-ap-

parent's loins. But, although the entering into the state of matrimony in regular form, and with the accustomed publicity, might afford the desired facilities of a pecuniary kind, such a step little suited the taste of the illustrious personage usually termed "the hope of the country." That the restraints of wedlock should be dreaded by one to whom all restraint had hitherto been a stranger, and who could set at nought whatever obligations of constancy that holy and comfortable state imposed, was wholly out of the question. If that were all, he could have no kind of objection to take as many wives as the law of the land allowed, supposing the dower of each to be a bill upon the patient good-nature of the English people, towards discharging some mass of debt contracted. But there had happened another event, not quite suited to the people's taste, although of a matrimonial kind, which had been most carefully concealed for very sufficient reasons, and which placed him in a predicament more embarrassing even than his pecuniary difficulties.

The most excusable by far, indeed the most respectable of all the Prince's attachments, had been that which he had early formed for Mrs. Fitzherbert, a woman of the most amiable qualities, and the most exemplary virtue. Her abilities were not shining, nor were her personal charms dazzling, nor was she even in the first stage of youth; but her talents were of the most engaging kind: she had a peculiarly sweet disposition, united to sterling good sense, and was possessed of manners singularly fascinating. His passion for this excellent person was a redeeming virtue of the Prince; it could only proceed from a fund of natural sense and good taste, which, had it but been managed with ordinary prudence and care, would have endowed a most distinguished character in private life; and, could it by any miracle have been well managed in a palace, must have furnished out a ruler before whose lustre the fame of Titus and the Antonines would grow pale. This passion was heightened by the difficulties which its virtuous object interposed to its gratification; and upon no other terms than marriage could that be obtained. But marriage with this admirable lady was forbidden by law! She was a Roman Catholic; sincerely attached to the religion of her forefathers, she refused to purchase a crown by conforming to any other; and the law declared, that whoever married a Catholic should forfeit all right to the crown of these realms, as if he were naturally dead. This law, however, was unknown to her, and, blinded by various pretences, she was induced to consent to a clandestine marriage, which is supposed to have been solemnized between her and the Prince beyond the limits of the English dominions, in the silly belief, perhaps, entertained by him, that he escaped the penalty to which his reckless conduct exposed him, and that the forfeiture of his succession to the crown was only denounced against such a marriage if

contracted within the realm.* The consent of the Sovereign was another requisite of the law to render the marriage valid: that consent had not been obtained; and the invalidity of the contract was supposed to save the forfeiture. But they who so construed the plain provision in the Bill of Rights, assumed first, that no forfeiture could be incurred by doing an act which was void in itself, whereas the law of England, as well as of Scotland, and every other country,† abounds in cases of acts prohibited and made void, yet punished by a forfeiture of the rights of him who contravenes the prohibition, as much as if they were valid and effectual. The same courtly reasoners and fraudulent match-makers of Carlton House next assumed that statutes so solemn as the Bill of Rights and Act of Settlement could be varied, and, indeed, repealed in an essential particular, most clearly within their mischief, by a subsequent law which makes not the least reference whatever to their provisions; while no man could doubt that to prevent even the attempt at contravening those prohibitions was the object of the Law, in order to prevent all risks; it being equally manifest that, if merely preventing a Catholic from being the Sovereign's consort had been the only purpose of the enactment, this could have been most effectually accomplished by simply declaring the marriage void, and the forfeiture of the crown became wholly superfluous. It is, therefore, very far from being clear that this marriage was no forfeiture of the crown. But, it may be said, the Prince ran this risk only for himself, and no one has a right to complain. Not so. The forfeiture of the crown was his own risk assuredly; but he trepanned Mrs. Fitzherbert into a sacrifice of her honour to gratify his passion, when he well knew that the ceremony which she was made to believe a marriage could only be regarded as a mere empty form, of no legal validity or effect whatever; unless, indeed, that of exposing her, and all who assisted, to the high pains and penalties of a *præmunire*. While he pretended that he was making her his wife, and made her believed she was such, he was only making her the victim of his passions, and the accomplice of his crimes.

A few years after, when those passions had cooled, or were directed into some new channel, the rumour having got abroad, a question was asked in Parliament respecting the alleged marriage. His chosen political associates were appealed to, and, being instructed

* Some affirm that it was performed in London at the house of her uncle.

† To lawyers this matter is quite familiar. In England, if a tenant for life makes a feoffment in fee, this forfeits his life estate, although the attempt to enlarge his estate is altogether ineffectual, and the feoffee takes nothing by the grant. In Scotland, if an heir of entail, fettered by the fencing clauses, makes a conveyance contrary to the prohibitions, the deed is wholly void, and yet he forfeits the estate, to use the words of the Bill of Rights, "as if he were naturally dead."

by him, denied the charge in the most unqualified terms. Before such men as Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey could thus far commit their honour, they took care to be well assured of the fact by direct personal communication with the Prince himself. He most solemnly denied the whole upon his sacred honour; and his denial was, through these most respectable channels, conveyed to the House of Commons. We are giving here a matter of history well known at the time;—a thousand times repeated since, and never qualified by the parties, nor ever contradicted on their behalf. It must be confessed, that this passage of the Prince's story made his treatment of Mrs. Fitzherbert complete in all its parts. After seducing her with a false and fictitious marriage, he refused her the poor gratification of saving her reputation, by letting the world believe he had really made her his wife. Instances are not wanting of men committing in public a breach of veracity, and sacrificing truth, to save the reputation of their paramours; nor is any moralist so stern as to visit with very severe censure conduct like this. But who was there ever yet so base as deliberately to pledge his honour to a falsehood, for the purpose of his own protection, and in order to cover with shame her whom his other false pretences had deceived into being his paramour? Bad as this is, worse remains to be told. This treachery was all for the lucre of gain; the question was raised, upon an application to Parliament for money; and the falsehood was told to smooth the difficulties that stood in the way of a vote in a Committee of Supply!

The influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert gave place to another connexion, but she retained that sway over his mind which we have described as the brightest feature in the Prince's character. Hence he spared no pains to make her believe that the public denial of their wedlock was only rendered necessary by his father's prejudices and tyrannical conduct. She well knew, that to find an example of fear greater than that dread with which he quailed at the sound of his father's voice, or indeed the bare mention of his name, it was necessary to go among the many-coloured inhabitants of the Caribbee Islands; and hence she could the more easily credit the explanation given of the disclaimer so cruel to her feelings. In private, therefore, and with her, he still passed himself for her husband, and she learned, like other and more real wives, to shut her eyes upon his infidelities, while her empire over his mind remained unshaken. The pressure of new difficulties rendered a regular marriage necessary for his extrication; but as this must at once and for ever dispel all that remained of the matrimonial delusion, he long resisted the temptation, through fear of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and dread of their intercourse coming to a violent end. At length the increasing pressure of his embarrassments overweighed all other considerations, and he consented to a marriage, and to give up Mrs. Fitzherbert for ever.

Others with whom he lived upon the most intimate terms are supposed to have interposed fresh obstacles to this scheme; but these were overcome by an understanding that the new wife should enjoy only the name;—that systematic neglect and insult of every kind heaped upon her should attest how little concern the heart had with this honourable arrangement, and how entirely the husband continued devoted to the wedded wives of other men. Every thing was now settled to the satisfaction of all parties. The old spouse was discarded—the old mistresses were cherished, fondled, and appeased —the faithful Commons were overjoyed at the prospect of a long line of heirs to the crown—the loyal people were enraptured at the thoughts of new princes and princesses—the King, while he felt his throne strengthened by the provision made for the succession, was gratified with whatever lowered the person he most hated and despised—and the Prince himself was relieved of much debt, and endowed with augmented resources. One party alone was left out of the general consideration—the intended consort of this illustrious character, whose peculiar pride it was to be called by his flatterers the "First Gentleman in Europe."

Caroline Princess of Brunswick was the individual whom it was found convenient to make the sacrifice on this occasion to an arrangement that diffused so universal a joy through this free, moral, and reflecting country. She was niece of George III., and consequently one of the Prince's nearest relations. Nor has it ever been denied, that in her youth she was a Princess of singular accomplishments, as well of mind as of person. All who had seen her in those days represented her as lovely; nor did she, on touching our shores, disappoint the expectations which those eye-witnesses had raised. All who had known her in that season of youth, and before care had become the companion of her life, and the cruelty of others had preyed upon her feelings and sapped her understanding, described her mental endowments as brilliant; and a judge, alike experienced and severely fastidious, long after she had come amongst us, continued to paint her as formed to be "the life, grace, and ornament of polished society."* Her talents were indeed far above the ordinary level of women, and had her education not been rather below the average stock of Princesses, they would have decked her in accomplishments remarkable for any station. Endowed with the greatest quickness of apprehension, with a singularly ready wit, and with such perseverance as is rarely seen in the inmates of a court, she shone in conversation, and could have excelled in higher studies than statuary, the only one to which she devoted her attention. If it be said that her buoyant spirits were little compatible with the etiquette

* Mr. Canning in the House of Commons.

of a German court, and made her attend less to forms than the decorum of our English palaces, under the cold and stiff reign of George and Charlotte, might seem to require—so must it be confessed, on the other hand, that no person of the exalted station to which this great lady was born, and the still higher elevation of rank which she afterwards reached, ever showed such entire freedom from all haughtiness and pride, or more habitually estimated all who approached her by their intrinsic merits. The first duchess in the land, or the humblest of its peasants, were alike welcome to her, if their endowments and their dispositions claimed her regard; and, if by the accident of birth she was more frequently thrown into the fellowship of the one, she could relish the talk, seek out the merits, admire the virtues, and interest herself in the fortunes of the other, without ever feeling the difference of their rank, even so far as to betray in her manner that she was honouring them by her condescension. Thus all might well be charmed with her good-nature, lively humour, and kindly demeanour, while no one ever thought of praising her affability.

But Caroline of Brunswick had far higher qualities than these; she put forward, in the course of her hapless and checkered existence, claims of a much loftier caste. She had a delight in works of beneficence that made charity the very bond of her existence; nor were the sufferings of her life unconnected with this amiable propensity of her nature. Her passionate fondness for children, balked by that separation from her only offspring to which she was early doomed, led her into the unwise course of adopting the infants of others, which she cherished as if they had been her own. Her courage was of the highest order of female bravery, scorning all perils in the pursuit of worthy objects, leading her certainly into adventures that were chiefly recommended by their risks, but, like the active courage of a woman, suffering occasionally intervals of suspension according to the state of the animal spirits, possibly influenced by the physical constitution of the female frame, although the passive virtue of fortitude never knew abatement or eclipse. There were occasions, indeed, when her two distinguishing characteristics were both called forth in unison, and her brave nature ministered to her charity. While travelling in the East, the plague broke out among her suite. Unappalled by a peril which has laid prostrate the stoutest hearts, she entered the hospital, and set to others the example of attending upon the sick, regardless of even the extreme risk which she ran by hanging over their beds and touching their persons. Let it be added to this, that her nature was absolutely without malice or revenge; that she hardly knew the merit of forgiveness of injuries, because it cost her nothing; and that a harsh expression, a slanderous aspersion, any indication of

hatred or of spite, never broke from her, even when the resources of ingenuity were exhausted in order to goad her feelings, and self-defence almost made anger and resentment a duty.

It will be said that the fair side is here presented of this remarkable picture,—remarkable if the original were found in a cottage, but in a palace little short of miraculous. If, however, there be so fair a side to the portraiture, shall it not turn away the wrath that other features may possibly raise on reversing the medal? But that is not the defence, nor even the palliation, which belongs to this unparalleled case. Was ever human being so treated—above all, was ever woman so treated as this woman had been—visited with severe censure if she at some time fell into the snares at all times laid for her undoing? Were ever faults, made next to unavoidable, by systematic persecution in all matters down to the most trifling from the most grave, regarded as inexpiable, or only to be expiated by utter destruction? It is one of the grossest and most unnatural of the outrages against all justice, to say nothing of charity, which despots and other slave-owners commit, that they visit on their hapless victims the failings which their oppressions burn as it were into the character—that they affect disgust and reprobation at what is their own handiwork—and assume from the vices they have themselves engendered a new right to torment whom they have degraded. These men can never learn the lessons of inspired wisdom, and lay their account with reaping as they have sowed. Were a tyrant to assume some strange caprice, by grafting the thorn upon the vine-tree, or placing the young dove among vultures to be reared, surely it would surpass even the caprice of a tyrant, and his proverbial contempt of all reason beyond his own will, were he to complain that he could no longer gather grapes from the plant, and that the perverted nature of the dove thirsted for blood. Did any parent, unnatural enough to turn his child among gipsies, ever prove so senseless or unreasonable as to complain of the dishonest habits his offspring had acquired? By what title, then, shall a husband, who, after swearing upon the altar to love, protect, and cherish his wife, casts her away from him, and throws her into whatever society may beset her in a strange country, pretend to complain of incorrect demeanour, when it is no fault of his that there remains in the bosom of his victim one vestige of honesty, of purity, or of honour? It is not denied, it cannot be denied, that levities little suited to her station marked the conduct of the Princess; that unworthy associates sometimes found admittance to her presence; that in the hands of intriguing women she became a tool of their silly, senseless plots; that, surrounded by crafty politicians, she suffered her wrongs to be used as the means of gratifying a place-hunting ambition, which rather crawled than climbed; and that a character naturally only distinguished by mere heedless open-

ness, and a frankness greater than common prudence seems to justify in those who dwell in palaces, became shaded, if not tarnished, by a disposition to join in unjustifiable contrivances for self-defence. But the heavy charges of guilt brought against her, in two several investigations, were triumphantly repelled, and by the universal assent of mankind scattered in the wind, amidst their unanimous indignation; and from the blame of lesser faults and indiscretions into which she is admitted to have been betrayed, the least regard to the treatment she met with must, in the contemplation of all candid minds, altogether set her free.

No sooner was the marriage solemnized, which plunged the country into unmixed joy, and raised a mingled expectation and sneer among the population of the court, than the illustrious husband proceeded to the most exemplary, and indeed scrupulous fulfilment of his vows —but not those made at the altar. There were others of a prior date, to which, with the most rigorous sense of justice, he therefore gave the preference;—performing them with an exactness even beyond the strict letter of the engagement. It is true they were not quite consistent with the later obligations "to love, cherish, and protect;" but they were vows notwithstanding, and had been attested with many oaths, and fierce imprecations, and accompanied with a touching and a copious effusion of tears. Their purport was an engagement to reject, to hate, and to insult the wedded wife; to yield her rivals, not unwedded, but the helpmates of other lords, the preference on all occasions; to crown the existence of the one with all favour, and affection, and respect, while that of the other should be made wretched and unbearable by every slight which could be given, every outrage which could be offered to the feelings most tyrannical over the female bosom. Swift followed, then, upon the making of the second and public vow, the punctual fulfilment of the first and private obligation. Never did the new-married pair meet but in the presence of others; the Princess was treated on every occasion, but most on public occasions, with ostentatious neglect, nay, with studied contumely; each resource of ingenious spite was exhausted in devising varied means of exhibiting her position in melancholy contrast with the empire of her rivals: when she submitted, trampled upon as dastardly and mean; when she was reluctantly goaded into self-defence, run down and quelled and punished as contumacious; and as soon as maltreatment was suspected to have begotten the desire of retaliation, she was surrounded with spies, that not a gesture or a look, a word or a sigh, might pass unregistered, unexaggerated, unperverted. Yet no one incident could be found upon which to hang the slightest charge of impropriety. Witness the necessity to which the Whig friends of Carlton-House were reduced (for want of other blame), of complaining that the sympathy of the people had

been awaked in behalf of the persecuted and defenceless stranger; and that she did not shun occasions of seeing her only friend, the People, so carefully as the Whig notion of female propriety deemed fitting, or the Carlton-House standard of conjugal delicacy required.

At the end of a tedious and sorrowful year, the birth of the Princess Charlotte once more intoxicated the nation with loyal joy, and made it forget as well the silent sorrows of the one parent, as the perfidious cruelty of the other. Scarce had the mother recovered, when a fresh and unheard-of outrage greeted her returning health. The "First Gentleman of his age" was pleased, under his own hand, to intimate that it suited his disposition no longer to maintain even the thin covering of decency which he had hitherto suffered to veil the terms of their union; he announced that they should now live a part; and added, with a refinement of delicacy suited to the finished accomplishments of his pre-eminence among gentlemen, that he pledged himself never to ask for a nearer connexion, even if their only child should die,—he added, with a moving piety, "Which God forbid!" —in case it might be imagined that the death of the daughter was as much his hope as the destruction of the mother. The separation thus delicately effected made only an apparent change in the relative position of the parties. They had before occupied the same house, because they had lived under one roof, but in a state of complete separation; and now the only difference was, that, instead of making a partition of the dwelling, and assigning her one half of its interior, he was graciously pleased to make a new division of the same mansion, giving her the outside, and keeping the inside to his mistresses and himself.

The incessant vigilance with which the unhappy Princess's conduct was now watched, by eyes ready to minister fictions to those who employed them, soon produced a report that their prey had fallen into the appointed snare. It was duly represented to the "Most amiable Prince of his times," living with his paramours, that the wife whom he had discarded for their society, and to whom he had given what the head of the law, his comrade and adviser,* scrupled not to term "a Letter of Licence," had followed his example, and used the licence; in short, that she had been secretly delivered of a child. No intrigue had been denounced as detected by the spies; nor could any person be fixed on as he who had committed high treason, by defiling the solitary bed to which the "Companion of the King's son" † had been condemned by her tender and faithful consort. The charge, however, was made, and it was minutely investigated,—not by the friends of the accused, but by the poli-

* Lord Thurlow.

† *La Compagne Fitz le Roi*—says the Statute of Treasons.

tical and the personal associates of her husband. The result was her complete and triumphant acquittal of all but the charge that she had, to vary the monotony of her sequestered life, adopted the child of a sailmaker in the neighbourhood of her residence; thus endeavouring to obtain for her own daughter's society a substitute upon whom the natural instinct of maternal feeling might find a vent, to relieve an overburthened heart. It was little creditable, certainly, to the Commissioners who conducted this "Delicate Investigation," as it was termed, that they stopped to mention levities of conduct wholly immaterial, and confessedly quite inoffensive in her, while they cautiously abstained from pronouncing any censure upon the guilt of the other party, by whose faithlessness and cruelty her existence had been rendered a scene of misery.

In those days the accidental distributions of party had made the Princess acquainted with the most eminent of the Tory chiefs—Lord Eldon, Mr. Perceval, and Mr. Canning. These distinguished personages composed her familiar society, and they were her faithful counsellors through all her difficulties. Nor would it have been easy to find men on whom she could more safely rely for powerful assistance as advocates, or able advice as friends. They prepared an elaborate statement of the Princess's case, which accidental circumstances kept them from making public; but enough of the proceeding transpired to make the country aware of the extraordinary course which had been pursued by the Prince's political friends.

It is difficult to describe the sensation which the Report of the Secret Tribunal made wherever a knowledge of its contents reached. That a wife, a Princess, and a stranger should be subjected to treatment the most cruel and unmanly, should then be driven from the shelter of her husband's roof, should be surrounded by spies and false witnesses, and, having been charged with a capital offence—nay, with high treason—should be tried behind her back, with the most able counsel to attend on behalf of her persecutor and accuser, without a human being present on her behalf, so much as to cross-examine a witness, or even to take a note of the evidence,—was a proceeding which struck all men's minds with astonishment and dismay, and seemed rather to approach the mockery of all justice presented in the accounts of eastern seraglios, than to resemble anything that is known among nations living under constitutional Governments. But if the investigation itself was thus an object of reprobation and disgust, its result gave, if possible, less satisfaction still. What could be said of a sentence which showed that, even when tried behind her back, and by an invisible tribunal formed wholly of her adversaries, not the shadow of guilt could be found in her whole conduct; and that even the mercenary fancies and foul perjuries of the spies had failed to present any probable matter of blame; and yet

instead of at once pronouncing her innocent and unjustly accused, begrudged her the poor satisfaction of an acquittal, and, fearful of affording her the triumph to which innocence is entitled, and offending the false accuser, both passed over all mention of her unparalleled wrongs, and left a stigma upon her name by the vague recommendation that the King should advise her concerning certain levities or indiscretions of behaviour—an allusion so undefined, that any one might fill up the dark outline as his imagination should enable him, or his want of common charity prompt him to do? Every one knew that, had there been the least tangible impropriety, though falling far short of guilt, it would have been stated in the Report; but the purposes of the accuser, to which the secret judges lent themselves, were best served by a vague and mysterious generality, that meant everything, and anything, as well as nothing, and enabled him to propagate by his hireling favourites, all over society, any new slanders which he might choose to invent.

The confirmed insanity of the King, three years afterwards, called to the Regency the chief actor in these unhappy scenes. No prince ever ascended the throne with so universal a feeling of distrust, and even aversion. Nor was this lessened when the first act of his reign proved him as faithless to his political friends as he had been to his wife; and as regardless of his professed public principles as he had been of his marriage vows. It added little respect to the disesteem in which he was so universally held, that he was seen to discard all the liberal party with whom he had so long acted; with whom, after an interval of separation, he had become again intimately united, and among them the very men who had stood by him in his domestic broils; whilst he took into full favour his determined enemies, and, worst of all, the very men who had prepared attacks upon him too outrageous to find a publisher!

The accession of the Princess's friends to the Regent's favour was the period of their intercourse with their former client. Not the slightest communication could now be held with her whose just quarrel they had so warmly espoused while the Prince was their antagonist; and Mr. Canning alone of them all, to his transcendent honour, refused to pay the tribute exacted by the Court of deserting a former friend, because an enemy had been found placable; and because, he, setting too high a value upon his forgiveness, required his new favourites to be as perfidious as himself.

It is impossible to separate from the history of George IV. that of his wife, for it is united with the most remarkable features of his character; his boundless caprice—his arbitrary nature—his impatience of contradiction and restraint—his recklessness of consequences when resolved to attain a private end—qualities which, if guided by a desire of compassing greater ends and sustained by adequate courage, would

have aroused a struggle for absolute power, fatal either to the liberties of the country or to the existence of the monarchy.

The Princess of Wales, wearied out with unceasing persecution, had gone abroad, leaving behind her, as the only support on which she could rely, her only daughter, disease having deprived her of the steady favour and undeviating support of the King, her father-in-law and uncle. The death of both that King and that daughter was the signal of new attempts against her peace. The history of the Milan Commission is fresh in the recollection of all. A board of three persons—a Chancery lawyer, who had never seen a witness examined, and whose practice was chiefly confined to cases in bankruptcy, on which he had written an excellent book—a colonel in the army, who knew but little more of the matter—an active and clever attorney—composed this select body, commissioned to huntfor evidence which might convict the future Queen, and be ready to overwhelm her if she asserted her right to share her consort's throne.

Sir John Leach was an active adviser of all these nefarious proceedings; nor could all England, certainly not all its bar, have produced a more unsafe counsellor. With great quickness of parts, an extraordinary power of fixing his attention upon an argument, and following steadily its details, a rare faculty of neat and lucid statement, even of the most entangled and complicated facts, considerable knowledge of legal principles, and still greater acquaintance with equity practice, he was singularly ignorant of the world, and had no kind of familiarity with the rules or the practice of evidence in the courts of common or criminal law. Moderately learned even in his own profession, beyond it he was one of the most ignorant men that ever appeared at the bar. Yet, by industry, and some art of gaining favour, by making himself useful to the powerful and the wealthy, little scrupulous how much he risked in any way to serve them, he had struggled with the defects of a mean birth and late adoption into the rank he afterwards so greatly affected; and he had arrived at extensive practice. "Nullum ille poetam noverat, nullum legerat oratorem, nullam memoriam antiquitatis collegerat: non publicum jus, non privatum et civile* cognoverat.—Is omnibus exemplo debet esse quantum in hâc urbe polleat multorum obedire tempori, multorumque vel honori, vel periculo servire. His enim rebus, infimo loco natus, et honores, et pecuniam, et gratiam consecutus, etiam in patronorum sine doctrinâ, sine ingenio, aliquem numerum pervenerat." (Cic. *Brutus*.) The power of deciding causes, which he showed when raised to the bench, was favourably contrasted with the dilatory and doubting habits of Lord Eldon; but there was much of what Lord Bacon calls "affected despatch" in his proceedings;

* Equity, *jus prætorium*, is not very clearly here excluded.

and while he appeared to regard the number of judgments which he pronounced in a given time far more than their quality, he left it to his learned chief to complain that cases were decided at the Rolls, but heard when they came by appeal before the Chancellor: while the wits, calling one the court of *oyer sans terminer*, named the other that of *terminer sans oyer;* and a great and candid critic (Sir S. Romilly) professed himself, to Lord Eldon's extreme delight, better pleased with the tardy justice of the principal than with the swift injustice of the deputy. The ridicule which he threw around his conduct in society, by his childish devotion to the pursuits of fashionable life, in which neither his early habits nor his turn of mind fitted him to excel, was another result derived from the same want of sound judgment. But its worst fruit was that unhesitating and overweening confidence in his own opinion, which exceeded that of any other man, and perpetually led both himself and his clients astray. Uncontrolled conceit, a contracted understanding that saw quickly and correctly very near objects, and disbelieved in the existence of all beyond, conspired with a temper peculiarly irascible, to give him this habit of forming his opinion instantaneously, and this pertinacity in adhering to it, excluding all the light that could afterwards be let in upon the subject. The same hasty and sanguine temperament made him exceedingly prone to see matters as he wished them to be; and when he had a client whom he desired to gratify, or for whom he felt a strong interest, his advice became doubly dangerous; because, in addition to his ordinary infirmities of judgment, he formed his opinion under all the bias of his wishes, while he gave it and adhered to it without running any hazard in his own person. His courage, both personal and political, was frequently commended; but there may be some doubt if to the latter praise he was justly entitled. His personal gallantry, indeed, was quite unquestionable, and it was severely tried in the painful surgical operations to which he submitted with an ease that showed the risk and the suffering cost him little. But the peculiarity of his character that made him so wise in his own conceit, and lessened the value of his counsels, also detracted much from the merit of his moral courage, by keeping him blind to difficulties and dangers, the presence or the approach of which could be discovered by all eyes but his own.

Such was the counsellor whom the Regent trusted, and who was as sure to mislead him as ever man was that undertook to advise another. The wishes of his great client were well known to him; his disrelish for the caution, and the doubts, and the fears of Lord Eldon had been oftentimes freely expressed; Sir John Leach easily saw every part of the case as the Regent wished—quickly made up his mind on the pleasing side—set himself in the same advantageous contrast with the Chancellor on this, as he delighted to do on more

ordinary occasions—and, because he perceived that he delighted the royal consultor at present, never doubted that his successful conduct of the affair would enable him to supplant his superior, and to clutch the Great Seal itself. The possibility of royal ingratitude never entered his narrow mind, any more than that of his own opinion being erroneous; nor did he conceive it within the nature of things, that in one respect the client should resemble his adviser, namely, in retaining his predilection only so long as measures were found to succeed, and in making the counsellor responsible in his own person for the failure of all from whom anything had ever been expected. Under these hopeful auspices, the most difficult and delicate affair ever yet undertaken by statesmen was approached; and while, under the sanguine counsels of Sir John, no one of the conspirators ever thought of questioning the success of their case, another question was just as little asked among them, which yet was by far the most important of all—Whether, supposing the case proved against the Princess, the conspirators were one hair's-breadth nearer the mark of effecting her ruin, or whether that first success would not bring them only the nearer to their own.

The Milan Commission proceeded under this superintendence, and as its labours, so were its fruits exactly what might have been expected. It is among foreigners the first impression always arising from any work undertaken by English hands and paid for by English money, that an inexhaustible fund is employed, and with boundless profusion; and a thirst of gold is straightway excited which no extravagance of liberality can slake. The knowledge that a Board was sitting to collect evidence against the Queen immediately gave such testimony a high value in the market of Italian perjury; and happy was the individual who had ever been in her house or admitted to her presence; his fortune was counted to be made. Nor were they who had viewed her mansion, or had only known the arrangements of her villa, without hopes of sharing in the golden prize. To have even seen her pass and noted who attended her person, was a piece of good luck. In short, nothing, however remotely connected with herself, or her family, or her residence, or her habits, was without its value among a poor, a sanguine, and an imaginative people. It is certain that no more ready way of proving a case, like the charge of criminal intercourse, can be found, than to have it first broadly asserted for a fact; because, this being once believed, every motion, gesture, and look is at once taken as proof of the accusation, and the two most innocent of human beings may be overwhelmed with a mass of circumstances, almost all of which, as well as the inferences drawn from them, are really believed to be true by those who recount or record them. As the treachery of servants was the portion of this testimony which bore

the highest value, that, of course, was not difficult to procure; and the accusers soon possessed what, in such a case, may most truly be said to be *accusatori maxime optandum*—not, indeed, *confitentes reos*, but the man-servant of the one, and the maid-servant of the other supposed paramour. Nor can we look back upon these scenes without some little wonder how they should not have added even the *confitentem reum*: for surely in a country so fertile of intriguing men and abandoned women—where false oaths, too, grow naturally, or with only the culture of a gross ignorance and a superstitious faith—it might have been easy, we should imagine, to find some youth like Smeatton in the original Harry the Eighth's time, ready to make his fortune, both in money and female favours, by pretending to have enjoyed the affections of one whose good-nature and easy manners made the approach to her person no difficult matter at any time. This defect in the case can only be accounted for by supposing that the production of such a witness before the English public might have appeared somewhat perilous, both to himself and to the cause he was brought to prop with his perjuries.

Accordingly, recourse was had to spies, who watched all the parties did, and, when they could not find a circumstance, would make one; men who chronicled the dinners and the suppers that were eaten, the walks and the sails that were enjoyed, the arrangements of rooms and the position of bowers, and who, never doubting that these were the occasions and the scenes of endearment and of enjoyment, pretended to have witnessed the one, in order that the other might be supposed; but with that inattention to particulars which Providence has appointed as the snare for the false witness, and the safeguard of innocence, pretended to have seen in such directions as would have required the rays of light to move not straightforward, but roundabout. Couriers that pried into carriages where the travellers were asleep at grey daylight, or saw in the dusk of dewy eve what their own fancy pictured,—sailors who believed that all persons could gratify their animal appetites on the public deck, where themselves had so often played the beast's part,—lying waiting-women, capable of repaying the kindness and charity that had laid the foundation of their fortune, with the treachery that could rear it to the height of their sordid desires,—chambermaids, the refuse of the streets and the common food of wayfaring licentiousness, whose foul fancy could devour every mark that beds might, but did not, present to their practised eye,—lechers of either sex, who would fain have gloated over the realities of what their liquorish imagination alone bodied forth,—pimps of hideous aspect, whose prurient glance could penetrate through the keyhole of rooms where the rat shared with the bug the silence of the deserted place—these were the performers whose exploits the Milan Commissioners chronicled,

whose narratives they collected, and whose exhibition upon the great stage of the first tribunal of all the earth they sedulously and zealously prepared by frequent rehearsal. Yet, with all these helps to success, with the unlimited supply of fancy and of falsehood which the character of the people furnished, with the very body-servants of the parties hired by their wages, if not bought with a price—such an array could only be produced as the whole world at once pronounced insufficient to support any case, and as even the most prejudiced of assemblies in the accuser's favour turned from with disgust.

The arrival of the Queen in this country, on the accession of George IV., was the signal for proceeding against her. A *green bag* was immediately sent down to the two Houses of Parliament, containing the fruits of the Milanese researches; and a Bill of Pains and Penalties was prepared for her destruction. Such was the proceeding of the Court, remarkable enough, certainly, in itself—sufficiently prompt—abundantly daring—and unquestionably pregnant with grave consequences. The proceeding of the country was more prompt, more decided, and more remarkable still. The people all in one voice Demurred to the Bill. They said, "Suppose all to be true which her enemies allege, we care not: she was ill-used; she was persecuted; she was turned out of her husband's house; she was denied the rights of a wife as well as of a mother; she was condemned to live the life of the widow and the childless, that he who should have been her comforter might live the life of an adulterous libertine; and she shall not be trampled down and destroyed to satiate his vengeance or humour his caprice." This was the universal feeling that occupied the country. Had the whole facts as charged been proved by a cloud of unimpeachable witnesses, such would have been the universal verdict of that country, the real jury which was to try this great cause; and so wide of their object would the accusers have found themselves at the very moment when they would have fancied the day their own. This all men of sense and reflection saw; this the Ministers saw; this, above all, the sagacious Chancellor very clearly saw, with the sure and quick eye which served his long and perspicacious head; but this Sir John Leach never could be brought for a moment even to comprehend, acute as he was, nor could his royal friend be made to conceive it; because, though both acute men, they were utterly blinded by the passions that domineered in the royal breast, and the conceited arrogance that inspired the vulgar adviser.

But if the Ministers saw all these things, and if they moreover were well aware—as who was not?—that the whole country was excited to a pitch of rage and indignation bordering upon rebellion, and that the struggle, if persisted in against a people firmly resolved to stand between the Court and its prey, must hurry them into wide-spread-

ing insurrection—how, it will be asked, was it possible that those Ministers—whose hatred of the bill must have been as great as their apprehension of its consequences were grave, and who had not the shadow of an interest in its fate, except that it should instantly be abandoned—could be brought to sanction a proceeding fraught not only with every mischief to the country, but with the extremest peril to themselves? The great difficulty of answering this question must be confessed; nor is it lessened by the reflection that at the head of the Government in those days there were men whose prudence was more striking than any other quality; men cautious, unpretending, commonplace, and loving place, like Lord Liverpool; wary, cold, circumspect, though of unflinching courage, like Lord Castlereagh; far-sighted, delighting in seeing all difficulties that existed, and many that did not, like Lord Eldon; above all, so firm-minded a man as the Duke of Wellington,—a man, too, so honourable in all his feelings, and so likely to influence the councils, if he failed to turn aside the desires, of the Sovereign. The defenders of the Ministers never affected to doubt the mischievous nature of the whole proceeding; they admitted all their opinions to be strongly and decidedly against it; they saw, and confessed that they saw, all the dangers to which it exposed the country; they did not deny that it was the mere personal wish of the King; and that it was the bounden duty, as well as the undoubted interest of his Ministers, peremptorily to refuse their assistance to such a wicked and hopeless project;—admitting, all the while, that as the bill never could be carried through and executed, all the agitation with which so monstrous an attempt was convulsing the country had absolutely not a chance of success, in so far as concerned the King's object. Then, what reason did they assign for the Ministers lending themselves to such an enormity? It seems incredible, but it is true, that the only ground ever hinted at was the King's fixed determination, and the risk his Ministers ran of losing their places if they thwarted him in his favourite pursuit! Yes, as if the loss of office was like the loss of life, and they had no power of refusing, because refusal was death, they crouched to that command, rather than yield to which, men of integrity and of firmness would have faced death itself. It is certain, that had the Duke of Wellington been longer in civil life, and attained his due weight in the councils of the Government, he would have taken this and no other view of the question; but it is equally certain that the Ministers at large betrayed the same submissive obedience to their master's will, showed the same dread of facing his displeasure, which unnerves the slaves of the Eastern tyrant when his voice echoes through the vaults of the seraglio, or casts them prostrate before his feet, as the scimitar's edge glances in their eye, and the bowstring twangs in their ear.

The course taken by the leading supporters of the Queen rendered the conduct of the Government still more despicable. It was early announced by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons that nothing could be more safe than for the Ministers to refuse carrying through the bill, because, if the Regent, after that, should venture to dismiss them on account of their refusal, no man among their adversaries would venture to take office from which the former occupants had been driven for refusing to abandon their duty, and fly in the people's face. The Regent at once perceived the tendency of this announcement; and he met it in the only way that could be devised for counteracting that tendency. He gave his Ministers to understand, that if he turned them out for refusing to go on with the bill, he should take their adversaries into their places without requiring them to adopt or support it. The contrivance was certainly not without ingenuity; but a little reflection must have satisfied even the most timorous place-holder that he had little to fear from so senseless a resolution, and that, as long as the Whigs refused to outbid them for the royal favour in the only stock which had any value at Carlton House, support of the bill, there was no chance whatever of their being taken into office on any other terms. There surely must be something in official life as sweet as natural life is supposed to be, and something peculiarly horrible to statesmen in the bare possibility of political death—else why this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after longevity—or why this dread of dissolution that makes the soul shrink back upon itself? But in one material particular the two kinds of life and death widely differ. The official's death-bed is not cheered by any hopes of immortality. The world to which he now looks forward is another, but not a better world. He knows full sure that, from the pleasing state of being to which he has been so long used and so fondly clings, he must instantly, on the great change taking place, be plunged into the dreary night of a placeless existence; be cast away with other mournful ghosts on the tempest-beaten coast of Opposition, there to wander uncertain of ever again being summoned from that inhospitable shore, or visiting the cheerful glimpses of the courtly day. Hence it is, that while men of ordinary powers are daily seen to meet death in the breach for honour or patriotism, hardly any can be found, even among the foremost men of any age, whose nerves are firm enough to look in the face the termination of official existence; and none but one bereft of his senses ever makes himself a voluntary sacrifice for his principles or his country. The Ministers of 1820 numbered not among them any one so void of political reason as to follow Mr. Canning's noble example, and all were resolved to forego the discharge of every duty, and incur, both then and ever after, the

loudest reproaches, rather than put to hazard the existence of the Administration.

The people, we have said, in one voice Demurred to the Bill, and plainly indicated that, if any tittle of the charges against the Queen were proved, or were admitted to be true, they would not suffer her to be sacrificed to the rage of one who had no right whatever to complain of her conduct, were it ever so bad. But this feeling did not prevent them from also being prepared, in justice towards her character, to take issue upon the fact; and accordingly the trial before the Lords was looked to with the most universal and painful anxiety, though with a confidence that nothing could shake. After a strenuous but unavailing attempt to arrest the progress of the measure, and fling out the bill on the first reading, her Majesty's counsel, Mr. Brougham, her Attorney, and Mr. Denman, her Solicitor General, prepared to resist it upon the merits of the case, to meet the evidence of the Milan Commissioners, and to defend their august client from every accusation.* An adjournment of some weeks was allowed the promoters of the measure to prepare their case; the Parliament, instead of the usual prorogation, remained sitting, though the Commons adjourned from time to time; and the 17th of August was fixed for the opening of this extraordinary cause. All that public expectation and anxiety excited to the highest pitch could lend of interest to any trial, was here combined, with the unexampled attendance daily of almost all the Peers of the empire, the assistance of all the judges of the land, the constant presence of the Commons, a vast concourse of spectators. The Queen several times proceeded to the House in state, accompanied by her suite; and occupied a seat near her counsel, but within the bar. The Nobles best known to the surrounding multitude were greeted on their way to and from Westminster with expressions of popular feeling, friendly or hostile, according as they were known to take part with or against her Majesty; but, on the whole, extraordinary tranquillity prevailed. This was very much owing to the undoubted confidence of a favourable result, which kept possession of the people from the very first; for when the deposition of the chief witness against the Queen had proved very detrimental to her case, and her adversaries were exulting before his cross-examination had destroyed his credit, very alarming indications of irritation and rage were perceived, extending from the people to the troops then forming the garrison of the capital. Nor were there wanting those who judged it fortunate for the peace of the empire and the stability of the throne, that so popular a Prince and so very determined a man as the Duke of Kent

* Her other counsel were Mr. Justice Williams, Mr. Serjeant Wilde, and Dr. Lushington.

was not then living to place himself at the head of the Queen's party, espoused as that was by the military no less than by the civil portion of the community.

After great and memorable displays of eloquence and professional skill, it was found that the case had failed entirely; and the bill, which for so many months had agitated the whole country, was at length, on the 7th of November, withdrawn. It is said that the advisers of the Queen were dissatisfied with the conduct of that party to which they, generally speaking, belonged, the Whigs—because these might have much more shortly made an end of the case. There were several periods in the proceeding which offered the firmest ground for that great and powerful body to act with decisive effect; espousing as it did the right side of the question, but espousing feebly, and not very consistently. If at any of those points they had made a strenuous resistance, and refused to proceed farther, though they might have been defeated by a small majority, the conductors of the Queen's case would at once have withdrawn from a proceeding which presented daily to the indignant world the spectacle, most abhorrent to every right feeling, of justice outraged no less in form than in substance. Had they retired from this scene of mockery and vexation, the country was so entirely with them, that the Lords never would have ventured to proceed in their absence.* But fate ordered it otherwise; the whole case on both sides was exhausted to the very dregs; and, the accusation failing, the Ministers were fain, on carrying one vote by only a majority of seven, to withdraw their master's bill and leave him to himself. There is every reason to believe that they were too happy to have so good a pretence for sounding a retreat from their hazardous position; and they rested satisfied with allowing the King to continue the same petty warfare of annoyance and insult in which the royal veteran had formerly reaped so many laurels, only refusing him any more Bills of Attainder.

Under such aggressions upon her peace and the comforts of all her associates and supporters, after a struggle of less than a year, the gallant nature sunk, which had borne up against all neglect, braved the pitiless storms of incessant annoyance, and finally triumphed over the highest perils with which persecution could surround her. The people continued firmly her friend, but the upper classes were,

* The difficulties in which the Whig leaders then were placed hardly fell short of those of the Ministers. Than Lord Grey's whole conduct nothing could be more noble: whether the powers which he displayed or the honest independence of his demeanour be regarded. But we must restrain ourselves from the subject, so inviting, of sketching that amiable, honourable, and highly gifted person's character—offering such a brilliant contrast to many of whom we have spoken. Long, very long may it be before so irreparable a loss brings him within the province of history!

as usual, found unable to face the frowns, or resist the blandishments of the Court. As long as the interest of the contest continued, and popular favour could be gained by supporting the right side, these aristocratic partisans could defy, or thought they could defy, the royal displeasure. But when the excitement had subsided, and no precise object seemed furthered by any more popularity, they were disposed, some to regain lost favour elsewhere, almost all to avoid widening the breach. There would be no use in concealing the truth, were it not already well known; the Queen's circle became daily more and more contracted; her cause was as much as ever allowed to be that of right and justice: her husband's conduct was that of a tyrant destitute alike of feeling and of honour; but he was powerful, and she was weak; so the sentiment generally felt was, that the subject was irksome, that it might as well now be dropped, that there never were such atrocities as the Prince had committed, nor such balls as he well and wisely gave from time to time, and that, if the sense of public duty commanded votes and speeches against the Bill in either House of Parliament, a feeling of what was due to near and dear relatives dictated the private duty of eschewing all that could close against their fashionable families the doors of Carlton House. In this state of the public mind, the resolution of the Queen once more to leave a country where her lot had been so wretched, would, upon its being disclosed, have produced very different effects in the various parts of the community. The people would have felt general concern, probably great, perhaps just displeasure; the Aristocracy, even its Liberal members, would have rejoiced at the removal of an irksome inconvenience. This plan, when on the eve of being carried into execution, was frustrated by Her Majesty's death. Exhausted by continued and unremitted persecution, and suffering severely by the signal failure of an attempt to attend the coronation, ill-devised and worse executed, because planned against the peremptory remonstrances of her law advisers, and executed without any of her accustomed firmness of purpose, she was stricken with a malady that baffled all the resources of the medical art, and expired, after declaring to her chief adviser, in an affecting interview, that she was happy to die, for life had never been an enjoyment to her since her early years, and was now become a heavy burthen.

It is remarkable that the extreme fondness for young children which had twice before led her into trouble, should have caused her to do the only reprehensible act of her latter days.* The adoption of

* In the acts which caused this celebrated Princess to be sometimes taxed with the habitual ingratitude of her *caste*, something may always be allowed for inconsistency and want of reflection. A striking instance of this occurred on the defeat of the Bill, in 1820. Mr. Brougham waited upon her to announce it, and tender his congratulations. She instantly said that there was a sum of 7000*l.* at Mr. D.

the sailmaker's child had led to the "Delicate Investigation," as it was called, of 1806; the delight she took in the child of one of her attendants, when in Italy, was the cause of all the favour which the father enjoyed in her household; and now her love for the child of her chaplain induced her to make room for the parents in her establishment, removing Lord and Lady Hood, whose services during her last persecution had been all that the most devoted attachment could render, and whose rank fitted them for the place according to the strictness of Court etiquette. It is matter worthy of observation, that during the three hours of wandering which immediately preceded her decease, the names of any of the persons with whom she had been accused of improper conduct never escaped her lips; while she constantly spoke of those children,—a remarkable circumstance, if it be considered that the control of reason and discretion was then wholly withdrawn.

The body of the Queen lay in state at her villa near Hammersmith, and was conveyed through the metropolis attended by countless multitudes of the people. The Regent was then in Dublin, receiving those expressions of loyal affection in which our Irish fellow-subjects so lavishly deal, more especially when they are filled with expectations of thereby gaining some favourite object. Indeed, Mr. O'Connell himself, in consideration that money enough had not been spent in providing palaces, headed a proposition for building a mansion by subscription; but this, like so many other promises and threats, proved mere noise and bluster, not one farthing ever having been subscribed, nor any one step, probably, taken, after all this vapour. The Ministers, therefore, in their Master's absence, and having no orders from him, could only conjecture his wishes and act accordingly. They therefore called out the troops to prevent the funeral procession from passing through the City, and a struggle ensued with the people, which ended in the loss of life. Except that the funeral was turned aside at Hyde Park, this unjustifiable proceeding produced no effect; for, after moving along part of the New Road, it came back, supported by a countless multitude, and entered the Strand near Temple Bar, so as to traverse the whole City. The inscription upon the coffin, dictated by the Queen herself—"Ca-

Kinnaird's (the banker's), which she desired him to take, and distribute 4000*l.* of it among his learned coadjutors. This he of course refused. Her Majesty would take no refusal, but the day after recurred to the subject, and insisted on his laying her commands before her other Council. They all joined in the respectful refusal. A few weeks after, Mr. Kinnaird suggested that the salaries of her law officers were in arrear, they never having been paid. The sum was under 200*l.*, but she peremptorily refused to have it paid off—and both this arrear, and all their other professional emoluments, on the ordinary scale, were first paid after her decease by the Treasury, among the other expenses of the cause!

reline of Brunswick, the murdered Queen of England"—made some ecclesiastical authorities refuse it admission into the churches, on its way to the port of embarkation, where it arrived, accompanied by the executors—Mr. Sergeant Wilde and Dr. Lushington attending the remains of their royal client to the place of her final repose in Brunswick. The indecent haste with which the journey to Harwich was performed excited indignation in all, surprise in none. Nor was there perhaps ever witnessed a more striking or a more touching scene than the embarkation displayed. Thousands of all ranks thickly covered the beach; the sea, smooth as glass, was alive with boats and vessels of every size, their colours floating half-mast high, as on days consecrated to mourning; the sun shone forth with a brightness which made a contrast to the gloom that shrouded every face; the sound of the guns booming across the water at intervals impressed the solemnity upon the ear. Captains, grown grey in their country's service, were seen to recall the Princess's kindness and charities, whereof they had been the witnesses or the ministers, unable to restrain the tears that poured along their scarred cheeks. At length the crimson coffin was seen slowly to descend from the crowded pier, and the barge that received it wheeled through the water, while the gorgeous flag of England floated over the remains of the "Murdered Queen," whose sufferings had so powerfully awakened the English people's sympathy, and whose dust they now saw depart from their shores for ever, to mingle with the ashes of an illustrious race of heroes,—smitten with feelings in which it would be vain to deny that a kind of national remorse at her murder exacerbated their deep commiseration for her untimely end.

Let it not be supposed that, in sketching the characters of George IV. and his Queen, this pen has been guided by the feelings of party violence to excuse the errors of the injured party, or exaggerate the offences of the wrongdoer. The portrait which has here been painted of him is undoubtedly one of the darkest shade, and most repulsive form. But the faults which gross injustice alone could pass over without severe reprobation, have been ascribed to their true cause,—the corrupting influence of a courtly education, and habits of unbounded self-indulgence upon a nature originally good; and, although the sacred rules of morality forbid us to exonerate from censure even the admitted victim of circumstances so unfriendly to virtue, charity, as well as candour, permit us to add, that those circumstances should bear a far larger share of the reprehension than the individual, who may well claim our pity, while he incurs our censure.

It is impossible to close the sketch of these two exalted personages without a reflection suggested by the effects which were produced upon the public mind by the two most remarkable events connected

with their personal history—the death of the Princess Charlotte, and the persecution of the Queen.

To those who witnessed the universal and deep affliction into which the nation was plunged by the former event, no description of the scene is necessary—to those who saw it not, all description would fail in conveying an adequate idea of the truth. It was as if each house had been suddenly bereaved of a favourite child. The whole country felt the blow, as if it had been levelled at every family within its bounds. While the tears of all classes flowed, and the manlier sex itself was softened to pity, the female imagination was occupied, bewildered, distracted, and the labours of child-bearing caused innumerable victims among those whom the incident had struck down to the ground. Yet the fact of a young woman dying in childbed was anything rather than out of the course of nature; certainly not a town in which it did not happen every month—possibly not a parish of any extent in which it did not occur every year; and in neither town nor parish had the event ever produced the least sensation beyond the walls of the house in which the mournful scene took place.

So the maltreatment, however gross, of a wife by her husband is unhappily by no means an event of rare occurrence. It is not often, certainly, that so cruel and arbitrary a course of conduct has been pursued as that of George IV. towards his consort; but then cases of even greater brutality frequently occur, and pass with but little notice beyond the very small circle of those immediately connected with the parties. But the case of Queen Caroline flung the whole country into a state of excitement only equalled in universality and intenseness by the pangs of grief felt for her daughter's death two years before. Every family made the cause its own. Every man, every woman, took part in the fray. Party animosities, personal differences, were suspended, to join with an injured wife against her tyrant husband. The power of sovereignty itself was shaken to its centre. The military and the civil powers bore their part in the struggle which threatened the monarchy with destruction. The people were so much exasperated that they refused to the injured party herself the right to judge of her own injuries. When she intimated a wish to withdraw from endless persecution, and put a period to incessant annoyance, by retiring from the country, the multitude was roused to frenzy by the bare mention of such a movement, and would have sacrificed to their infuriated sense of the Queen's injuries those advisers who should have counselled her retirement, nay, the Queen herself, who really wished to go away, and restore the peace of the kingdom, while she consulted her own repose. So great was the diversity in the public consideration of a royal and a private family quarrel!

The treatment experienced by the King himself affords an additional illustration of the extreme favour in whch kings are holden by their subjects in these realms. Than George IV. no prince was ever more unpopular while his father lived and reigned; nor could any one have been astonished more than that father would have been could he have seen the different eyes with which his son was regarded, when heir apparent to his throne, and when filling it as his successor. He would then have learnt how much of his own popularity depended upon his station, how little upon his personal fitness for the office. The Regency began: it was the peried of our greatest military glory; all our warlike enterprises were crowned with success; the invincible Napoleon was overthrown, and banished as a criminal to a colony made penal for his special reception. Still the Regent gained no popular favour. At length his father, who had long ceased to reign, and, for any purposes of our rational nature, to exist, ceased to live. The Regent now only changed his name and style; for he had eight years before succeeded to the whole powers of the Crown. They who remember the winter of 1820 must be aware that the same individual who a week before the death of George III. had travelled to and fro on the Brighton and Windsor roads without attracting more notice than any ordinary wayfaring man, was now, merely because his name was changed to King from Regent, greeted by crowds of loyal and curious subjects, anxious to satiate their longing eyes with the sight of a king in name; the reality of the regal officer having been before the same eyes for eight years, and passed absolutely unnoticed.

In a few months came the Queen, and her trial speedily followed. The unpopularity of the Monarch was now renewed in more than its former generality and virulence. Nor was any prince, in any age or country, ever more universally or more deeply hated than George IV. during the year 1820. The course of the proceeding—his discomfiture in an attempt more tyrannical than any of Henry VIII.'s, and carried on by more base contrivances—his subsequent oppression of his consort in every way—her melancholy end, the victim of his continued persecution—were assuredly ill calculated to lessen the popular indignation, or to turn well-merited scorn into even sufferance, far less respect. Yet such is the native force of reaction in favour of Royal personages, that he who a few months before durst as soon have walked into the flames as into an assembly of his subjects in any part of the empire, was well received in public wherever he chose to go, and was hailed by his Irish subjects rather as a god than a man, he having notoriously abandoned the principles he once professed in favour of that Irish people and their rights.

The accession of the present Queen was supposed by some to be rather a rude trial of the monarchical principle, inasmuch as a young

lady of eighteen, suddenly transplanted from the nursery to the throne, might, how great soever her qualifications, be deemed hardly fit at once to hold the sceptre of such a kingdom in such times. But all apprehensions on the subject must have instantly ceased, when it was observed that there broke out all over the country an ungovernable paroxysm of loyal affection towards the illustrious lady, such as no people ever showed even to monarchs endeared by long and glorious reigns to subjects upon whom their wisdom or their valour had showered down innumerable benefits. The expectation bore the place of reality. The Queen was believed to have every quality that it was desirable she should possess. There was a physical impossibility of her ever having done anything to earn the gratitude of her subjects, because she had only reigned a day; and yet the most extravagant professions of attachment to her person and zeal for her character burst forth from the whole country, as if she had ruled half a century and had never suffered a day to pass without conferring some benefit upon her people, nor ever fallen into any of the errors incident to human weakness. It is true that the best friends both of the sovereign and of the monarchy viewed this unreflecting loyalty with distrust, and suspected that a people, thus ready to worship idols made with their own hands, might one day break their handiwork—that they who could be so very grateful for nothing might hereafter show ingratitude for real favours,—and that, having, without any grounds beyond the creation of their fancy, professed their veneration for an unknown individual, they might afterwards, with just as little reason, show neglect or dislike. But at any rate the feeling of enthusiastic loyalty and devotion to the sovereign, merely because she was sovereign, could not be doubted, and it could not be exceeded.*

And can it, after all these passages in our recent history, be said that the English people are of a republican tendency—that they care little for the affairs of princes or their smiles—that they are indifferent to, or impatient of, kingly government? Rather let it be asked if there is on the face of the globe any other people to whom the fortune and the favour of kings and queens are so dear an object of concern? The people of France, under their Grand Monarque, may have made themselves ridiculous by changing the gender of a word permanently, when their prince by mistake called for "mon carosse;" the Romans may have affected a twisted neck to imitate the

* It is hardly necessary to observe that no opinions whatever disrespectful or unkind towards the illustrious persons mentioned in these three paragraphs can be intended to be conveyed. What is said of the Queen's persecutions sufficiently proves this. In regard to the present Sovereign, it may be added that the above passage was written early in February, and before the harsh and unjust treatment which has lately been shown.

personal defect of Augustus; these were rather the base flatteries of courtly parasites than the expression of feelings in which the public at large bore any part. The barbarians of Russia flocking to be murdered by their savage Czar, or the slaves of Eastern tyrants kissing the bowstring that is to end their existence, act under the immediate influence of strong and habitual religious feeling—the feeling that makes men quail and bow before a present divinity. But no people, no rational set of men, ever displayed to an admiring world the fondness for kings and queens, the desire to find favour in the royal sight, the entire absorption in loyal contemplations, which has generally distinguished the manly, reflecting, free-born English nation.

It is commonly said that the Irish far exceed us in yielding to mere impulses; and certainly the scenes at Dublin in 1821 are well calculated to keep alive this impression. But the excess on that memorable occasion was not great over what had been witnessed in this country, and extraordinary pains were undoubtedly taken to make it believed that George IV. was favourably disposed towards his Irish subjects, nay, that he could be talked, and hurraed, and addressed over, as it were, and deluded by fine honeyed phrases and promises of subscription, into abandoning his new opinions, as he had before given up his old. The balance, therefore, between the two nations being struck, it can hardly be said that the sister kingdom materially excels our own country in the zealous affection for mere royalty.

It is very manifest, therefore, that the notion is wholly groundless which represents the cause of Royalty to be more unfavourably regarded in these kingdoms than elsewhere. A broad and a deep foundation exists in all the feelings, tastes, and habits of the people for building up a solid monarchical structure. Principles of policy, opinions upon the relative merits of different systems, are the result of reflection: they may be propagated, may be acquired; they may be strengthened, may be impaired; nay, they may give place to other views taken up after experience and on deliberate consideration; and the formation or the change of such sentiments is never within the power of the rulers or the instructors of the community. But these sentiments, also, are much less to be relied upon for support in any crisis, and they are far less to be dreaded in any alteration which they may undergo, than the strong feelings born with men, and constituting a part of their very nature—feelings which they have not learned at the school of state affairs, or had inculcated by their instructors, or dictated by their leaders, but which form about as much a portion of their mental constitution, and almost influence it as much, as the blood that fills their veins does the structure and the functions of the body. This invaluable security the monarchical principle has in England, and it must, therefore, be the fault of the

monarch, and his family, and his servants, if it should ever prove ineffectual to save the Crown.

But there is no greater danger besetting that Crown than will arise from a disposition to rely too much upon the strong national love of monarchy which has just been feebly pourtrayed. That its strength and elasticity is great, no man can doubt; that it possesses a singularly restorative virtue, a wonderful power of recovering the kingly authority after the rudest shocks which it can sustain, is certain; but it may be stretched till it cracks, and it may be relaxed by too frequent use. A wise and a prudent foresight, too, will teach the sovereign and his servants that the antagonist principle, ever at work, may both conjure up a storm which cannot be weathered, and may gradually undermine, and, as it were, eat into, that habitual devotion to royalty which, if the monarchy have but fair play, seems powerful enough to carry it through all ordinary trials.

LORD ELDON.

During the whole of the Regency and the greater part of his reign, George IV.'s councils were directed by Lord Liverpool, but the power which kept his ministry together was in reality the Chancellor, Lord Eldon; nor did it exist for a day when that powerful aid was withdrawn. For, although this eminent person did not greatly excel in debate, although he personally had no followers that could be termed a party, and although he certainly was of little service in deliberation upon state affairs from the turn of his mind, rather fertile in objections than expedients, he yet possessed a consummate power of managing men, an admirable address in smoothing difficulties with princes, of whom he had large experience, and a degree of political boldness where real peril approached, or obstacles seemingly insurmountable were to be got over, that contrasted strongly with his habits of doubting about nothing, and conjuring up shadowy embarrassments, and involving things of little moment in imaginary puzzles, the creation of an inventive and subtle brain.

This remarkable person had been one of Mr. Pitt's followers from early life, had filled under him the office of Attorney-General during the troublous period of the revolutionary war, and had thus been the principal instrument in those persecutions of his reforming associates which darken the memory of that illustrious minister. But when the Addington ministry was formed, and Lord Loughborough resigned the Great Seal, Lord Eldon, who had for a year presided over the

Common Pleas with great ability and acceptance in Westminster Hall, became Chancellor, and formed one of the main supports of that useful though feeble administration. After first giving peace to the country because the burthen of the war could no longer be borne, and then breaking it because they had not the firmness to remain quiet, or the resolution to resist a popular clamour chiefly excited by the newspapers, those ministers, having once more plunged the country into serious embarrassments, were assaulted by a factious league of Pittites, Foxites, Grenvilles, and Windhams, and only defended by two lawyers, Mr. Perceval in the Commons, Lord Eldon in the Lords. But neither of these useful supporters were thoroughly attached to the colours under which they fought; both had a strong leaning towards the leader of the allies, Mr. Pitt, under whom the friends and partisans of Lord St. Vincent, the great ornament of the cabinet, were combined to overthrow it upon the ground of attacking that great man's reforming administration; and, although nothing could exceed the zeal or spirit of the battle which both, especially Mr. Perceval, made in defence of the citadel, yet, as neither were averse, especially Lord Eldon, to rejoin their ancient Pitt standard, it is more than suspected that the gates of the garrison were opened by the scheming and politic Chancellor, who on this occasion displayed his unscrupulous and undaunted political courage, by carrying on the communication on state affairs with the monarch, while his faculties were as yet but half restored after their total alienation.

It is best that we pause upon this remarkable passage of both their lives—remarkable for the light it throws upon Lord Eldon's real character; perhaps yet more remarkable for the reflections to which it unavoidably gives rise upon the Monarchical form of government. There is not the least doubt whatever of the extraordinary fact that, after the King had been in a state of complete derangement fors ome weeks, and after the government had during those weeks been carried on by the ministers without any monarch, important measures were proposed to him, and his pleasure taken upon them after Mr. Pitt resumed his office, when the Sovereign was so little fit to perform the functions of his high station, that Dr. Willis was obliged to attend in the closet the whole time of his Majesty's interview with his Chancellor. Hence we see that the exigencies of this form of government not only imply the monarch exercising his discretion upon subjectswholly abo ve the reach of his understanding on many occasions; not only involve the necessity of the most difficult questions being considered and determined by one wholly incapable by nature, or unfitted by education, to comprehend any portion of them; not only expose the destinies of a great people to the risk of being swayed by a person of the meanest capacity, or by an ignorant and inexperienced child; but occasionally lead to the still more revolting absurdity of a

sovereign directing the affairs of the realm—conferring with the keeper of his conscience *circa arduа regni*,—while a mad-doctor stands by and has his assistants and the apparatus of his art ready in the adjoining chamber, to keep, by the operation of wholesome fear and needful restraint, the royal patient in order, and prevent the consultations of politic men from being checkered with the paroxysms of insanity.

But should it be said that this was an accident, or that it was an offence for which Lord Eldon and Mr. Pitt alone were amenable, and not the Constitution, it is to be further observed that the inevitable necessity entailed by that Constitution of the state affairs being conducted in the name and by the authority of a lunatic prince, whose pleasure is, in the eye of the constitutional law, taken at each step, though he is as unconscious of it all the while as the Grand Lama is of Thibet affairs, does not differ materially from the hardly more revolting scene to which we have just adverted as having been enacted in the spring of 1804. These things constitute part, and no small part, of the heavy price which we pay for the benefits of inestimable value secured by the Hereditary Monarchy, more especially the prevention which it affords of disputed succession and civil broils. But it is ever useful and becoming prudent men to bear in mind both sides of the account, and, while we justly prize the thing we have purchased, not to forget the price we have had to pay.

Lord Eldon, to great legal experience, and the most profound professional learning, united that thorough knowledge of men, which lawyers who practise in the courts, and especially the courts of common law,* attain in a measure and with an accuracy hardly conceivable by those out of the profession, who fancy that it is only from intercourse with courts and camps that a knowledge of the world can be derived. He had a sagacity almost unrivalled; a penetration of mind at once quick and sure; a shrewdness so great as to pierce through each feature of his peculiarly intelligent countenance; a subtlety so nimble, that it materially impaired the strength of his other qualities, by lending his ingenuity an edge sometimes too fine for use. Yet this defect, the leading one of his intellectual character, was chiefly confined to his professional exertions; and the counsellor so hesitating in answering an important case—the judge so prone to doubt that he could hardly bring his mind to decide one—was, in all that practically concerned his party or himself, as ready to take a line, and to follow it with determination of purpose, as the least ingenious of ordinary politicians. The timidity, too, of which he has been accused, and sometimes justly, was more frequently the

* For many years he went the northern circuit, and was a leader upon it, the unwholesome practice not having then been established which separates Equity men from Common Lawyers.

result of the subtlety and refinement which we have mentioned. At all events, no one knew better when to cast it off; and upon great occasions, like the one we have just been contemplating—that is, the occasions which put his interest or his power in jeopardy—a less wavering actor, indeed one more ready at a moment's warning to go all lengths for the attainment of his object, never appeared upon the political stage. His fears in this respect very much resembled his conscientious scruples, of which no man spoke more or felt less; he was about as often the slave of them as the Indian is of his deformed little gods, which he now makes much of, and now breaks in pieces, or casts into the fire. When all in politics seemed smooth, and the parliamentary sea was unruffled as the peaceful lake, nothing was to be heard but his lordship's deep sense of his responsible duties; his willingness to quit the Great Seal; the imminent risk there was of his not again sitting in that place; the uncertainty of all the tenures by which official life is held; and even the arrival of that season when it became him to prepare for a yet more awful change; and the hearer who knew the speaker, felt here an intimate persuasion, that the most religious of mortals could not have named the great debt of nature with more touching sincerity, or employed an expression better calculated to convey the feeling of dread which such contemplations are fitted to inspire. Such were the songs of the swan when the waters were a mirror, and there was no fear of dissolution. But in foul weather—the instant that peril approached—be the black cloud on the very verge of the horizon, and but the size of a man's hand—all these notes were hushed, and a front was assumed as if the Great Seal had been given to him for life, with the power to name his successor by a writing under his hand, or by parole before a single witness. In like manner, when the interests of suitors required despatch, when causes had been heard by the hour and by the day, and all the efforts of the judge to coax the advocate into greater prolixity had been exhausted, the dreaded moment of decision came, but brought only hesitation, doubt, delay. So, too, when common matters occurred in Parliament, and no kind of importance could be attached to the adoption of one course rather than another, bless us! what inexhaustible suggestions of difficulty, what endless effusion of conflicting views, what a rich mine of mock diamonds, all glittering and worthless, in the shape of reasons on all sides of some question never worth the trouble of asking, and which none but this great magician would stop to resolve! So again in the Council—when there was no danger of any kind, and it signified not a straw what was done, the day, had it been lengthened out by the sun being made to stand still, while our Joshua slew all the men in buckram that he conjured up, would yet have been too short to state and to solve his difficulties about nothing! But let there come any real embarrass-

ment, any substantial peril which required a bold and vigorous act to ward it off—let there be but occasion for nerves to work through a crisis which it asked no common boldness to face at all—let there arise some new and strange combination of circumstances, which, governed by no precedent, must be met by unprecedented measures, —and no man that ever sat at a Council board, more quickly made up his mind, or more gallantly performed his part. Be the act mild or harsh, moderate or violent, sanctioned by the law and constitution, or an open outrage upon both, he was heard indeed to wail and groan much of piteous necessity—often vowed to God—spoke largely of conscience—complained bitterly of his hard lot—but the paramount sense of duty overcame all other feelings; and, with wailing and with tears, beating his breast, and only not tearing his hair, he did in the twinkling of an eye the act which unexpectedly discomfited his adversaries, and secured his own power for ever. He who would adjourn a private road or estate bill for weeks, unable to make up his mind on one of its clauses, or would take a month to decide on what terms some amendment should be allowed in a suit, could, without one moment's hesitation, resolve to give the King's consent to the making of laws, when he was in such a state of mental disease, that the Keeper of his Person could not be suffered to quit the royal closet for an instant, while his patient was with the Keeper of his Conscience performing the highest function of sovereignty!

With all these apparent discrepancies between Lord Eldon's outward and inward man, nothing could be more incorrect than to represent him as tainted with hypocrisy, in the ordinary sense of the word. He had imbibed from his youth, and in the orthodox bowers which Isis waters, the dogmas of the Tory creed in all their purity and rigour. By these dogmas he abided through his whole life, with a steadfastness, and even to a sacrifice of power, which sets at defiance all attemps to question their perfect sincerity. Such as he was when he left Oxford, such he continued above sixty years after, to the close of his long and prosperous life;—the enemy of all reform, the champion of the throne and the altar, and confounding every abuse that surrounded the one, or grew up within the precincts of the other, with the institutions themselves; alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse.

One of the most important passages of this remarkable person's life was his participation in the councils of the Princess of Wales, while persecuted by the Whig allies of her royal consort. To her confidence, as to her society, Lord Eldon was recommended, not more by the extraordinary fertility of his resources as a counsellor in difficult emergencies, than by his singular powers of pleasing in the intercourse of private life. For his manners were rendered peculiarly attractive by the charm of constant good humour; and his conversation, if not

so classical and refined as that of his brother, Sir William Scott, and somewhat soiled with the rust of professional society and legal habits, was nevertheless lively and entertaining in a very high degree. That she derived great benefit from his support, his countenance, and his skilful advice, no one can doubt. The length to which his zeal is supposed to have carried him, of having a fierce attack on the Prince's conduct towards her printed at a private press, cannot fitly be dwelt upon here, because the whole passage has been confidently denied, and, how universal soever the belief was, confirmed by a copy or two of the work being preserved, so that the whole was afterwards reprinted, and openly sold, the share which Lord Eldon and Mr. Perceval were said to have had in the transaction has never been established by any decisive proofs. This much, however, is quite certain, that they both left their illustrious client at a very short notice, and became as zealous servants of her persecutor as they had once been of herself. The King, whose uneasiness under the necessity in which the death of Mr. Pitt had placed him, of being counselled by a Whig cabinet, was manifest during the whole of the year 1806, had resolved to change his ministers, and to quarrel with them upon the highly popular ground of their having made themselves the confederates of the Prince, then in the acme of his unpopularity, and, as such, taken part against the Princess. Fortunately for that party, whose utter ruin this would have consummated, another scent crossed his Majesty while in that pursuit, and he dexterously turned aside to follow it. This was the cry of No Popery, and Danger to the Church. Lord Eldon and his coadjutors were raised to power, and Mr. Perceval quitted his profession to share in the Government, that he might protect the altar from the Pope, and the Throne from the Whigs. For three or four years all went smoothly, and they continued the advocates of the wife, and the adversaries of the husband. A great change, however, was preparing in the relations of their allegiance. When the Prince became Regent he deserted his friends; he took his adversaries into his service; he soon added his favour, became fond of Lord Eldon's pleasant society, became by degrees tolerant of Mr. Perceval himself, and was affected to hysterical paroxysms when death deprived him of the man he had a few years before hated with a bitterness that spurned all bounds of common decency in the expressions which gave it vent.* The Princess was now entirely deserted by

* In 1806 His Royal Highness exclaimed to Sir Samuel Romilly, with most offensive personal abuse, and a comparison which cannot be recited, that he felt as if he could jump on him and stamp out his life with his feet. Mr. Percival was at the moment arguing the celebrated case of Miss Seymour at the Bar of the House of Lords; and taking the somewhat invidious line of denying that any guarantee given of payment by the Prince's promise could be available—first, because there was no reason to believe he would keep his promise; and next, because, if he did,

her former councillors, whose party tactics had led them to use her as an instrument for attacking their enemies. Neither Lord Eldon nor Mr. Perceval ever now darkened her doors; Mr. Canning, Lord Grenville, and Lord Dudley, alone of the party frequented her society; and this illustrious lady was thus placed in the cruel predicament of losing her former friends, the Tories, by their promotion, while her adversaries, the Whigs, awaiting not very patiently their own call, could hardly be expected to raise any obstructions beyond those already existing in their road to Court, by taking her part only because she was clearly right and had been cruelly wronged.

It remains to note the peculiarities that distinguished this eminent person's professional life, in which his long career was so remarkably brilliant. That he had all the natural qualities and all the acquired accomplishments which go to form the greatest legal character, is undeniable. To extraordinary acuteness and quickness of apprehension, he added a degree of patient industry which no labour could weary, a love of investigation which no harshness in the most uninteresting subject could repulse. His ingenuity was nimble in a singular degree, and it was inexhaustible; subtlety was at all times the most distinguishing feature of his understanding; and after all other men's resources had been spent, he would at once discover matters which, though often too far refined for use, yet seemed so natural to the ground which his predecessors had laboured and left apparently bare, that no one could deem them exotic and far fetched, or even forced. When, with such powers of inventing, he possessed a memory almost unparalleled, and alike capable of storing up and readily producing both the most general principles and the most minute details, it is needless to add that he became one of the most thoroughly learned lawyers who ever appeared in Westminster Hall, if not the most learned; for, when it is recollected that the science has been more than doubled in bulk, and in variety of subjects has been increased fourfold, since the time of Lord Coke, it is hardly possible to question his superiority to that great light of English jurisprudence, the only man in our legal history with whom this comparison can be instituted. A singular instance of his universality, and of the masterly readiness with which his extensive learning could be brought to bear upon any point, was once presented in the argument upon a writ of error in the House of Lords. The case had run the gauntlet of the courts, and the most skilful pleaders, as well as the most experienced judges, had all dealt with it in succession; when he, who had not for many years had the possibility of considering any such matters,

be was insolvent. The phrase expressive of His Royal Highness's wish, as given above, is in a very mitigated form; but, even as thus tempered, the reader may possibly deem its violation of all humanity and decorum sufficiently striking.

and had never at any time been a special pleader, at once hit upon a point in pleading which appeared to have escaped the Holroyds, the Richardsons, the Bayleys, the Abbots, the Littledales; and on that point the cause was decided.

From an excess of those endowments in which his extraordinary merits consisted, proceeded also his known and great defects. These were less conspicuous at the Bar than upon the Bench; though, even as an advocate and an adviser, they impaired his powers. His overdone ingenuity enfeebled the force of his argument; he presented every view that could be taken of his case, and many views that it was bootless to take, and that had better have been left unobserved. His opinion was with difficulty formed; and his answers to cases on which he was consulted often contained all the arguments on both sides, but left out the result. His firmness of purpose, too, and promptitude of decision, were extremely deficient. Seeing too many views of each matter to prefer a particular course and abide by his choice, he could as little make up his mind on the line to be taken in debate as on the opinion to be given in consultation. Hence he was defective in one of the great qualities of an advocate and a debater—a prompt and steady determination as to the course he should pursue, that which is called the *coup d'œil* in the field. His wish to leave nothing unnoticed, being proportioned to the extreme anxiety of his disposition, he frequently overlaid his case at the Bar, while the multitude of his points gave his adversaries the opportunity of entangling him in the mazes of his own web, and still oftener enabled them to defeat him on some immaterial ground where he was weak, though other stronger and impregnable positions were his, had he never ventured out of them to fight at a disadvantage. Where a single and a learned judge alone is to deal with a case, this will seldom mislead him, but before a jury its effects must have been extremely prejudicial. Accordingly, his greatest failures were in such proceedings. A case of high treason, which required nine or ten hours to state, was to the ordinary apprehension of all mankind a clear case for acquittal. This in the eyes of many lessened the brilliancy of Mr. Erskine's great victory, by diminishing the chances of a conviction; but the dreadful excitement of the times was enough to have carried the prosecutors through their bad work, even under all the disadvantages of Lord Eldon's very injudicious conduct of the cause. It was, perhaps, a yet greater fault that he suffered himself to be persuaded that a case of high treason existed, when, if he had only examined his proofs with a steady eye, he must have seen at once the merely seditious character of the whole matter, the certainty of a defeat if he prosecuted for treason, and the probability of a conviction had he gone upon the misdemeanor.

His elocution was easy, his language copious without being at all choice, his manner natural and not ungraceful. But to the qualities of eloquence he made small or no pretence. All that he desired to execute he readily enough accomplished; but no man could ever cite a speech of his either at the Bar or on the Bench, in the Commons or in the Lords, which had made any deep impression, or could be termed either a felicitous or in any way striking performance. Many of his arguments, replete with learning, and marked by extreme ingenuity, many of his judgments, painfully sifting each corner of the complicated case, dealing in a commanding manner with all the arguments, and exhausting all the learning that could be brought to bear upon it, might be cited with ease as memorable examples of labour, of learning, of subtlety. But not a single occasion ever was presented during his long forensic and parliamentary life in which any one even of his admirers could affect to be struck with his performance as great or masterly, although perhaps not an instance could be named of his speaking at all without displaying extraordinary resources and powers. There was always so much wanting to perfection as left no idea of it in the mind of the audience, either while he was working through his task, or after he had brought it to a close.

If the qualities which have been mentioned obstructed him as an advocate, they were still more likely to injure him as a judge. Yet it is certain that great errors were committed in regard to his judicial powers by those who only cursorily observed his apparent vacillation or infirmity of purpose. His opinion was really much more readily and generally formed on the Bench than at the Bar; and it was much more steadily abided by. He *appeared* to have great difficulty and slowness in coming to a determination. It would be far more correct to say that he had great reluctance to pronounce the decision he had long ago, without any hesitation, come to. The bad habit into which he fell, of not attending to the arguments while they were delivering before him, made him often postpone the forming of his opinion, but it was because he postponed giving his attention to the case. As soon as he brought his mind to bear upon it, he with great ease and quickness came to a judgment regarding it; and, having a great and most just confidence in the soundness of that judgment, he scarcely ever after altered it in any material respect. Indeed the hesitation with which he gave it at all, and, when he gave it, the numberless arguments on both sides which he produced, and the endless difficulties which he raised in the way of the course he was manifestly all the while taking, gave him every appearance of hesitation and uncertainty, and made the person who knew him not fear that he was a vacillating judge, who had hardly formed any opinion at all upon the case, and might be overset by the casting of dust in the balance to make each side almost indifferently preponderate. They who

knew him best were well aware that he had months before thoroughly sifted the whole question, formed a clear and unhesitating opinion upon it, come as quickly as possible to that opinion, and persisted in it with much greater firmness, nay pertinacity, than the most determined looking of his predecessors, Lord Hardwicke, who decided each case as he heard it, assigning shortly and clearly the grounds of his judgment, or Lord Thurlow, who growled out his determination without a doubt or a reason, and without any delay, as if the decision followed the argument by a physical train of connexion, and as if no such thing as a doubt could ever exist in the judicial nature, and no such thing as a reason could be asked at the hands of judicial wisdom and power. It would be no exaggeration at all to assert that Lord Eldon's judgments were more quickly formed, and more obstinately adhered to, than those of any other judge who ever dealt with such various, difficult, and complicated questions as he had to dispose of.

But the apparent hesitation and the certain delay were of the very worst consequence to his usefulness on the Bench; and his attention to the arguments of council produced on their part an habitual prolixity which the Bar has not yet recovered. From these causes arose the delays which in his time obstructed the course of justice, and well nigh fixed the current in perennial frost. It would be erroneous to say that all the efforts since made to clear the channels and revive the stream had restored its pristine and natural flow. The suitor and the country will long continue to feel the five-and twenty years of Lord Eldon's administration.

His knowledge and his ingenuity were not confined to his own peculiar branch of jurisprudence, the law of England. He was an admirable Scotch lawyer also; and he had the courage to decide, as well as the ability to sift, some of the greatest cases that have ever been brought by appeal from the Courts of Scotland, reversing the judgments of those courts on questions of pure Scotch conveyancing, and reversing them so as to offend those lawyers at first who were afterwards ready to confess that he was right, and had preserved the integrity of the Scotch law. But as a judge of appeal he often showed want of nerve; he would carp and cavil at the judgment below—argue over again all the reasonings of the judges—express doubts—raise difficulties—and show constant dissatisfaction—but end with affirming.

The defects which have been noted in his judicial capacity are of course to be traced in the Reports of his judgments. The force of the opinion, and even the course of the argument, are lost in the labyrinth of uncertainty, doubts, and ever conflicting arguments which make up the whole mass. In the sands which spread out far as the eye can reach, which shift perpetually about, which rise in whirls, and are tossed about and heaped up in mountains—the eye loses the

view of the point towards which the current of decision is directed, and indeed the current itself is lost in the wide expanse. These learned and elaborate performances are therefore of far less use than they might have been as guides to future lawyers; for the arguments are lost in special circumstances, and the principal points choked among the details. It was said, by Mr. Justice Williams, wittily and correctly, that they would be of special use as soon as the old Ptolemaic cycle should begin a second time to run, and every one thing to happen over again, and in the same order, which had occurred before.

The private character of Lord Eldon was blameless; his temper was admirable; his spirits gay and lively; his manners easy and graceful; far beyond those of any other man who had led his life of labour, and mingled but little in general society. In the domestic relations he was without a fault; affectionately attached to his family, mourning for years the great bereavement of his eldest son, and for years devoting himself to the care of an invalid wife with an assiduity not often exceeded. Indeed, it was to the accidental circumstance of his marriage, contracted clandestinely, and which prevented him from associating much with her family for some time, that they both owed the recluse habits which produced a distate for society, and led to a very exaggerated notion of his disposition being parsimonious. What little ground there was for the charge resulted, certainly, from the very narrow circumstances of his early life, the consequence of his imprudently marrying before he had an income sufficient to support a family. In those days he had qualified himself for acting as a conveyancer, in case his failure to obtain practice in London should make it advisable to retire into the country and lead the obscure though respectable life of a provincial barrister. Nor was this event in his history, at one period, improbable or remote. Weary with waiting for clients, he had resolved to quit Westminster Hall, and, turning his back on the "fumum, et opes, strepitumque Romæ," to seek his native city. The accident of a leading council's sudden indisposition introduced him to the notice of the profession, and prevented his name from being now only known as designating a still more learned and able recorder of Newcastle than the late very learned and able Mr. Hopper Williamson.

Reference has already been made to his powers of conversation; the part was named which he took in the select circle of the Princess of Wales, frequented by the most accomplished wits of the day. He was, indeed, a person of remarkable talents in that kind. His perfect good humour would, in his exalted station, have made his society agreeable anywhere but at a court; there he must shine more *proprio Marte* than by the foil of his station in the backgroumd: But he was well able to do so. He had no mean powers of wit, and much

quickness of delicate repartee. In relating anecdotes he excelled most men, and had an abundant store of them, though, of course, from the habits of his life, they were chiefly professional: his application of them to passing events was singularly happy. The mingled grace and dignity of his demeanour added no small charm to his whole commerce with society; and, although the two brothers differed exceedingly in this respect, it was usual to observe that, except Sir W. Scott, no man was so agreeable as Lord Eldon.

SIR WILLIAM SCOTT (LORD STOWELL).

Few names are more intimately connected either with classical or judicial recollections than the one which has been just mentioned.

There has seldom if ever appeared in the profession of the Law any one so peculiarly endowed with all the learning and capacity which can accomplish, as well as all the graces which can embellish, the judicial character, as this eminent person. Confining himself to the comparatively narrow and sequestered walks of the Consistorial tribunals, he had early been withdrawn from the contentions of the Forum, had lost the readiness with which his great natural acuteness must have furnished him, and had never acquired the habits which forensic strife is found to form—the preternatural power of suddenly producing all the mind's resources at the call of the moment, and shifting their application nimbly from point to point, as that exigency varies in its purpose or its direction. But so had he also escaped the hardness, not to say the coarseness, which is inseparable from such rough and constant use of the faculties, and which, while it sharpens their edge and their point, not seldom contaminates the taste, and withdraws the mind from all pure, and generous, and classical intercourse, to matters of a vulgar and a technical order. His judgment was of the highest caste; calm, firm, enlarged, penetrating, profound. His powers of reasoning were in proportion great, and still more refined than extensive, though singularly free from anything like versatility, and liable to be easily disturbed in their application to every-day use. If the retired and almost solitary habits of the comparatively secluded walk in which he moved, had given him little relish for the strenuous and vehement warfare of rapid argumentation, and the logic of unprepared debate, his vast superiority was apparent when, as from an eminence, he was called to survey the whole field of dispute, and to marshal the variegated facts, disentangle the intricate mazes, and array the conflicting reasons which were calculated to distract or suspend men's judgment.

If ever the praise of being luminous could be bestowed upon human compositions, it was upon his judgments, and it was the approbation constantly, and as it were peculiarly, appropriated to those wonderful exhibitions of judicial capacity.

It would be easy, but it would be endless, to enumerate the causes in which his great powers, both of legal investigation, of accurate reasoning, and of lucid statement, were displayed to the admiration not only of the profession, but of the less learned reader of his judgments. They who deal with such causes as occupied the attention of this great judge, have this advantage, that the subjects are of a nature connecting them with general principles, and the matter at stake is most frequently of considerable importance, not seldom of the greatest interest. The masses of property of which the Consistorial Courts have to dispose are often very great; the matrimonial rights on which they have to decide are of an interest not to be measured by money at all; but the questions which arise in administering the Law of Nations comprehend within their scope the highest national rights, involve the existence of peace itself, define the duties of neutrality, set limits to the prerogatives of war. Accordingly, the volume which records Sir W. Scott's judgments is not like the reports of common-law cases, a book only unsealed to the members of the legal profession; it may well be in the hands of the general student, and form part of any classical library of English eloquence, or even of national history. If among his whole performances it were required to select one which most excited admiration, all eyes would point to the judgment in the celebrated case of *Dalrymple* v. *Dalrymple*, where the question for his determination was the state of the Scottish law upon the fundamental point of what constitutes a marriage. The evidence given upon this question of fact (as it was before him, a foreign judge), consisted of the depositions of Scottish lawyers, the most eminent of their age, and who differed widely in their opinions, as well as the text-books referred to in their evidence. Through this labyrinth the learned civilian steered his way with an acuteness, a wariness and circumspection, a penetrating sagacity, and a firmness of decision, only to be matched by the singularly felicitous arrangement of the whole mass of matter, and the exquisite diction, at once beautifully elegant and severely chaste, in which his judgment was clothed. It is well known that this great performance, though proceeding from a foreign authority, forms at the present day, and will indeed always form, the manual of Scottish lawyers upon its important object.

It is possibly hypercritical to remark one inaccurate view which pervades a portion of this judgment. Although the Scottish law was of course only matter of evidence before Sir W. Scott, and as such for the most part dealt with by him, he yet allowed himself to ex-

amine the writings of commentators, and to deal with them as if he were a Scottish lawyer. Now, strictly speaking, he could not look at those text-writers, nor even at the decisions of judges, except only so far as they had been referred to by the witnesses, the skilful persons, the Scottish lawyers, whose testimony alone he was entitled to consider. For *they* alone could deal with either dicta of text-writers or decisions of courts. *He* had no means of approaching such things, nor could avoid falling into errors when he endeavoured to understand their meaning, and still more when he attempted to weigh them and to compare them together. This at least is the strict view of the matter; and in many cases the fact would bear it out. Thus we constantly see gross errors committed by Scottish and French lawyers of eminence when they think they can apply an English authority. But in the case to which we are referring, the learned judge certainly dealt as happily, and as safely, and as successfully, with the authorities as with the conflicting testimonies which it was his more proper province to sift and to compare. In all respects, then, the renown of this famous judgment is of the highest order, and has left every rival case of the same class far behind it.

Sir William Scott's learning, extensive and profound in all professional matters, was by no means confined within that range. He was amply and accurately endowed with a knowledge of all history of all times; richly provided with the literary and the personal portion of historical lore; largely furnished with stores of the more curious and recondite knowledge which judicious students of antiquity, and judicious students only, are found to amass; and he possessed a rare facility of introducing such matters felicitously for the illustration of an argument or a topic, whether in debate or in more familiar conversation. But he was above the pedantry which disdains the gratification of a more ordinary and every-day curiosity. No one had more knowledge of the common affairs of life; and it was at all times a current observation, that the person who first saw any sight exhibited in London, be it production of nature or of art or of artifice (for he would condescend to see even the juggler play his tricks), was Sir William Scott—who could always steal for such relaxations an hour from settling the gravest questions that could be raised on the Rights of Nations or the Ecclesiastical Law of the land. Above all, he was a person of great classical attainments, which he had pursued and, indeed, improved from the earlier years of his life, when he was a college tutor of distinguished reputation; and from hence, as well as from the natural refinement and fastidiousness of his mind, he derived the pure taste which presided over all his efforts, chastening his judicial compositions and adorning his exquisite conversation. Of diction, indeed, he was among the greatest masters, in all but its highest department of energetic declamation and fervent

imagery. "Quid multa? Istum audiens equidem sic judicare soleo, quidquid aut addideris, aut mutaveris, aut detraxeris, vitiosius et deterius futurum."*

To give samples of his happy command of language would be an easy thing, but it would almost be to cite the bulk of his Judgments. "Having thus furnished the rule which must govern our decision," said he, in the famous case already referred to, of *Dalrymple* v. *Dalrymple*, "the English law retires, and makes way for the Scottish, whose principles must finally dispose of the question." Quoting the words of Puffendorff (and, it may be observed in passing, misquoting them for the purpose of his argument, and omitting the part which answered it), who, after stating an opinion subtilely and sophistically held by some, adds, "Tu noli sic sapere," Sir William Scott at once gave it thus, in the happiest, the most literal, and yet the most idiomatic English—"Be not you wise in such conceits as these."

To illustrate by examples his singularly refined and pungent wit in conversation, or the happy and unexpected quotations with which he embellished it, or the tersely told anecdotes with which he enlivened it, without for an instant fatiguing his audience, would be far less easy,—because it is of the nature of the refined essence in which the spirit of the best society consists, not to keep. When some sudden and somewhat violent changes of opinion were imputed to a learned Judge, who was always jocosely termed Mrs. ——, "Varium et mutabile semper Femina," was Sir William Scott's remark. A celebrated physician having said, somewhat more flippantly than beseemed the gravity of his cloth, "Oh, you know, Sir William, after forty a man is always either a fool or a physician!" "Mayn't he be both, Doctor?" was the arch rejoinder,—with a most arch leer and an insinuating voice half drawled out. "A vicar was once" (said his Lordship, presiding at the dinner of the Admiralty Sessions) "so wearied out with his parish clerk confining himself to the 100th Psalm, that he remonstrated, and insisted upon a variety, which the man promised; but, old habit proving too strong for him, the old words were as usual given out next Sunday, 'All people that on earth do dwell.' Upon this the vicar's temper could hold out no longer, and, jutting his head over the desk, he cried, 'Damn all people that on earth do dwell!'—a very compendious form of anathema!" added the learned chief of the Spiritual Court.

This eminent personage was in his opinions extremely narrow and confined; never seeming to have advanced beyond "the times before the flood" of light which the American War and the French Revolution had let in upon the world—times when he was a tutor in

* Cic. de Orat. lib. iii.

Oxford, and hoped to live and die in the unbroken quiet of her bowers, enjoying their shade variegated with no glare of importunate illumination. Of every change he was the enemy; of all improvement, careless and even distrustful; of the least deviation from the most beaten track, suspicious; of the remotest risks, an acute prognosticator as by some natural instinct; of the slightestactual danger, a terror-stricken spectator. As he could imagine nothing better than the existing state of any given thing, he could see only peril and hazard in the search for any thing new; and with him it was quite enough, to characterise a measure as "a mere novelty," to deter him at once from entertaining it—a phrase of which Mr. Speaker Abbott, with some humour, once took advantage to say, when asked by his friend what that mass of papers might be, pointing to the huge bundle of the Acts of a single session—"Mere novelties, Sir William —mere novelties." And, in truth, all the while that this class of politicians are declaiming and are alarming mankind against every attempt to improve our laws, made judiciously and safely, because upon principle, and systematically, and with circumspection, they are unhesitatingly passing in the gross, and without any reflection at all, the most startling acts for widely affecting the laws, the institutions, and the interests of the country. It is deeply to be lamented that one endowed with such rare qualifications for working in the amendment of the Consistorial Law should have grown old in the fetters of a school like this. His peculiar habits of reasoning—his vast and various knowledge—his uniting with the habits of a judge, and the authority due to so distinguished a member of the Clerical Courts, all the erudition and polish of a finished scholar, and all the knowledge of the world and habits of society which are least to be expected in such dignitaries—finally, his equal knowledge of both the English and Scottish systems—seemed to point him out as the very person at whose hands this great branch of the jurisprudence of both nations might naturally have expected to receive its most important amendments.

DR. LAURENCE.

Contemporary with Sir William Scott, the leading practitioner in his courts, united to him in habits of private friendship, though indeed differing from him in many of his opinions and almost all his habits of thinking, was Dr. Laurence, one of the most able, most learned, and most upright men that ever adorned their common profession, or bore a part in the political controversies of their country.

He was, indeed, one of the most singularly endowed men, in some respects, that ever appeared in public life. He united in himself the indefatigable labour of a Dutch Commentator, with the alternate playfulness and sharpness of a Parisian Wit. His general information was boundless; his powers of mastering any given subject, were not to be resisted by any degree of dryness or complication in its details; and his fancy was lively enough to shed light upon the darkest, and to strew flowers round the most barren tracks of inquiry, had it been suffered to play easily and vent itself freely. But, unfortunately, he had only the conception of the Wit, with the execution of the Commentator; it was not Scarron or Voltaire speaking in society, or Mirabeau in public, from the stores of Erasmus or of Bayle; but it was Hemsterhuysius emerging into polished life, with the dust of many libraries upon him, to make the circle gay; it was Grævius entering the Senate with somewhere from one-half to two-thirds of his next folio at his fingers' ends, to awaken the flagging attention, and strike animation into the lazy debate. He might have spoken with the wit of Voltaire and humour of Scarron united; none of it could pierce through the lumber of his solid matter; and any spark that by chance found its way, was stifled by the still more uncouth manner. As an author, he had no such defects; his profuse stores of knowledge—his business-like habit of applying them to the point—his taste, generally speaking correct, because originally formed on the models of antiquity, and only relaxed by his admiration of Mr. Burke's less severe beauties; all gave him a facility of writing both copiously and nervously, upon serious subjects; while his wit could display itself upon lighter ones unincumbered by pedantry, and unobstructed by the very worst delivery ever witnessed, —a delivery calculated to alienate the mind of the hearer, to beguile him of his attention, but by stealing it away from the speaker, and almost to prevent him from comprehending what was so uncouthly spoken. It was in reference to this unvarying effect of Dr. Laurence's delivery, that Mr. Fox once said, a man should attend, if possible, to a speech of his, and then speak it over again himself: it must, he conceived, succeed infallibly, for it was sure to be admirable in itself, and as certain of being new to the audience. But in this saying there was considerably more wit than truth. The Doctor's speech was sure to contain materials not for one, but for half a dozen speeches; and a person might with great advantage listen to it, in order to use those materials, in part, afterwards, as indeed many did both in Parliament and at the Bar where he practised, and made an effort to attend to him, how difficult soever, in order to hear all that could be said upon every part of the question.* But whoever did so,

* The experiment mentioned by Mr. Fox has repeatedly been tried at the Bar by the writer of these pages to a certain extent and with success.

was sure to hear a vast deal that was useless, and could serve no purpose but to perplex and fatigue; and he was equally sure to hear the immaterial points treated with as much vehemence, and as minutely dwelt upon, as the great and commanding branches of the subject. In short, the Commentator was here again displayed, who never can perceive the different value of different matters; who gives no relief to his work, and exhausts all the stores of his learning, and spends the whole power of his ingenuity, as eagerly in dethroning one particle which has usurped another's place, as in overthrowing the interpolated verse in St. John, or the spurious chapter in Josephus, upon which may repose the foundations of a religion, or the articles of its creed.

It is hardly necessary to add, that they who saw Dr. Laurence only in debate, saw him to the greatest disadvantage, and had no means of forming anything like a fair estimate of his merits. In the lighter intercourse of society, too, unless in conversation wholly unrestrained by the desire of distinction, he appeared to little advantage; his mirth, though perfectly inoffensive and goodnatured, was elaborate; his wit or drollery wanted concentration and polish; it was unwieldy and clumsy; it was the gamboling of the elephant, in which, if strength was seen, weight was felt still more; nor was it Milton's elephant, recreating our first parents, and who, "to make them play, would wreathe his lithe proboscis;"—but the elephant bodily, and in a lumbering fashion, after the manner of his tribe. Yet set the same man down to write, and whose compositions are marked by more perfect propriety, more conciseness, more point, more rapidity? His wit sparkles and illuminates, without more effort than is requisite for throwing it off. It is varied, too, and in each kind is excellent. It is a learned wit, very frequently, and then wears an elaborate air; but not stiff or pedantic, not forced or strained, unless we deem Swift's wit, when it assumes this garb, unnatural or heavy—a sentence which would condemn some of his most famous pieces, and sweep away almost all Arbuthnot's together.

In his profession, Dr. Laurence filled the highest place. Practising in courts where a single judge decides, and where the whole matter of each cause is thoroughly sifted and prepared for discussion out of Court, he experienced no ill effect from the tedious style and unattractive manner which a jury could not have borne, and felt not the want of that presence of mind, and readiness of execution, which enable a *Nisi Prius* advocate to decide and to act at the moment, according to circumstances suddenly arising and impossible to foresee. He had all the qualities which his branch of the forensic art requires; profound learning, various and accurate information upon ordinary affairs as well as the contents of books, and a love of labour

not to be satiated by any prolixity and minuteness of detail into which the most complicated cause could run—a memory which let nothing escape that it had once grasped, whether large in size or imperceptibly small—an abundant subtlety in the invention of topics to meet an adversary's arguments, and a penetration that never left one point of his own case unexplored. These qualities might very possibly have been modified and blended with the greater terseness and dexterity of the common lawyer, had his lot been cast in Westminster Hall; but in the precincts of St. Paul's they were more than sufficient to place him at the head of his brethren, and to obtain for him the largest share of practice which any Civilian of the time could enjoy without office.

The same fulness of information and facility of invention, which were so invaluable to his clients, proved most important resources to his political associates, during the twenty years and more that he sat in Parliament; and they were almost equally useful to the great party he was connected with, for many years before that period. It was a common remark, that nothing could equal the richness of his stores, except the liberality with which he made them accessible to all. Little as he for some time before his death had taken part in debates, and scantily as he had been attended to when he did, his loss might be plainly perceived, for a long time, in the want generally felt of that kind of information which had flowed so copiously through all the channels of private intercourse, and been obtained so easily, that its importance was not felt until its sources were closed for ever. It was then that men inquired "Where Laurence was?" as often as a difficulty arose which called for more than common ingenuity to meet it; or a subject presented itself so large and shapeless, and dry and thorny, that few men's fortitude could face, and no one's patience could grapple with it; or an emergency occurred, demanding, on the sudden, access to stores of learning, the collection of many long years, but arranged so as to be made available to the most ignorant at the shortest notice. Men lamented the great loss they had experienced, and their regrets were mingled with wonder when they reflected that the same blow had deprived them of qualities the most rarely found in company with such acquirements; for, unwilling as the jealousy of human vanity is to admit various excellence in a single individual (*mos hominum ut nolint eundem pluribus rebus excellere*), it was in vain to deny that the same person, who exceeded all others in powers of hard working upon the dullest subjects, and who had, by his life of labour, become as a dictionary to his friends, had also produced a larger share than any one contributor, to the epigrams, the burlesques, the grave ironies and the broad jokes, whether in verse or in prose, of the Rolliad.

The highest of the praises which Dr. Laurence had a right to

challenge, remains. He was a man of scrupulous integrity and unsullied honour; faithful in all trusts, disinterested to a weakness. Constant, but rather let it be said, ardent and enthusiastic in his friendships; abandoning his whole faculties with a self-dereliction that knew no bounds, either to the cause of his friend, or his party, or the common-weal—he commanded the unceasing respect of all with whom he came in contact, or even in conflict; for when most offended with his zeal, they were forced to admit that what bore the semblance of intolerance was the fruit of an honest anxiety for a friend or a principle, and never was pointed towards himself. To the praise of correct judgment he was not so well entitled. His naturally warm temperament, and his habit of entering into whatever he took up with his whole faculties, as well as all his feelings, kindled in him the two great passions which checquered the latter part of Mr. Burke's life. He spent some years upon Mr. Hastings's Impeachment (having acted as council to the managers), and some upon the French Revolution, so absorbed in those subjects that their impression could not be worn out; and he ever after appeared to see one or other of them, and not unfrequently both together, on whatever ground he might cast his eyes. This almost morbid affection he shared with his protector and friend, of whom we have already spoken at great but not unnecessary length.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS.

No man after Dr. Laurence was more intimately mixed up with the great leader of the Impeachment which has just been mentioned, than Mr., afterwards Sir Philip Francis. He had early in life been taken from the War-office, where he was a clerk, and sent out to India as one of the Supreme Council, when the government of those vast settlements was new modelled, a promotion not easily understood, whether the dignity of the station, or its important functions at that critical period, be regarded. In the exercise of its duties he had displayed much of the ability which he undoubtedly possessed, more, perhaps, of the impetuous temper which as unquestionably belonged to him, all the hatred of other men's oppressions, and the aversion to corrupt practices, which distinguished him through life; and he had, in consequence of these qualities, become the regular opponent, and the personal enemy, of Warren Hastings, then governor-general, with whom his altercation ended, on the occasion, in a hostile rencounter and in a severe wound that threatened his life. Upon his return to Europe with a much smaller fortune than

the lax morality of Englishmen's habits in those days allowed the bulk of them to amass, his joining in the Impeachment was quite a matter of course. His local knowledge and his habits of business were of invaluable service to the managers; he exerted his whole energies in a cause so near his heart from every principle and from all personal feelings; nor could he ever be taught to understand why the circumstance of his being the private enemy of the man, as well as the public adversary of the governor, should be deemed an obstacle to his taking this part. The motives of delicacy, which so many thought that he ought to have felt on this subject, were wholly beyond his conception; for he argued that the more he disliked Mr. Hastings, the wider his ground of quarrel with him were, the more natural was it that he should be his assailant; and the reason for the House of Commons excluding him by their vote from a place among the managers, surpassed his powers of comprehension. Had the question been of making him a judge in the cause, or of appointing him to assist in the defence, he could well have understood how he should be deemed disqualified; but that a prosecutor should be thought the less fit for the office when he was the more likely strenously to discharge its duties of bringing the accused to justice and exacting punishment for his offences, because he hated him on private as well as public grounds, was a thing to him inconceivable. It never once occurred to him that an Impeachment by the Commons is like the proceeding of an Inquest; that the managers represent the grand-jury acting for the nation, and actuated only by the love of strict justice; and that to choose for their organ one who was also known to be actuated by individual passions, would have been as indecorous as for the prosecutor in a common indictment to sit upon the grand-jury, and accompany the foreman in presenting his bill to the court.

The trait which has just been given paints the character of Sir Philip Francis's mind as well as any that could be selected. It was full of fire, possessed great quickness, was even, within somewhat narrow limits, endued with considerable force, but was wholly wanting in delicacy, as well as unequal to taking enlarged views, and unfit for sober reflection. But his energy begot a great power of application, and he was accordingly indefatigable in labour for a given object of no very wide range, and to be reached within a moderate time; for anything placed at a distance his impatient nature disqualified him from being a competitor. His education had been carefully conducted by his father, the translator of Demosthenes and Horace, two works of very unequal merit as regards the English language, though abundantly showing a familiarity with both the Latin and the Greek. The acquaintance with classical compositions which the son thus obtained was extensive, and he added to it a still greater familiarity

with the English classics. His taste was thus formed on the best models of all ages, and it was pure to rigorous severity. His own style of writing was admirable, excelling in clearness, abounding in happy idiomatic terms, not overloaded with either words or figures, but not rejecting either beautiful phrases or appropriate ornament. It was somewhat sententious and even abrupt, like his manner; it did not flow very smoothly, much less fall impetuously; but in force and effect it was by no means wanting, and though somewhat more antithetical, and thus wearing an appearance of more labour than strict taste might justify, it had the essential quality of being so pellucid as to leave no cloud whatever over the meaning, and seemed so impregnated with the writer's mind as to wear the appearance of being perfectly natural, notwithstanding the artificial texture of the composition. In diction it was exceedingly pure; nor could the writer suffer, though in conversation, any of the modish phrases or even pronunciations which the ignorance or the carelessness of society is perpetually contributing, with the usages of Parliament, to vitiate our Saxon dialect. The great offender of all in this kind, the newspaper press, and perhaps most of any those half literary contributors to it who, enamoured of their own sentimental effusions and patchwork style, assume the licence of using words in senses never before thought of, were to him the object of unmeasured reprobation; and he would fling from him such effusions, with an exclamation that he verily believed he should outlive his mother tongue, as well as all memory of plain old English sense, unless those writers succeeded in killing him before his time. His critical severity, even as to the language and tone of conversation, was carried to what sometimes appeared an excess. Thus he was wont to say that he had nearly survived the good manly words of assent and denial, the *yes* and *no* of our ancestors, and could now hear nothing but "unquestionably," "certainly" "undeniably," or "by no means," and "I rather think not;" forms of speech to which he gave the most odious and contemptuous names, as effeminate and emasculated, and would turn into ridicule by caricaturing the pronunciation of the words. Thus he would drawl out "unquestionably" in a faint, childish tone, and then say, "Gracious God! does he mean *yes?* Then why not say so at once like a man?" As for the slip-slop of some fluent talkers in society, who exclaim that they are "*so* delighted," or "*so* shocked," and speak of things being pleasing or hateful "to a degree," he would bear down upon them without mercy, and roar out, "To what degree? Your word means any thing, and every thing, and nothing."

There needs no addition to this for the purpose of remarking how easily he was tired by prosers (those whom it is the mode to call *bores*), come they even under coronets and crowns. Once when the Prince of Wales was graciously pleased to pursue at great length

a narrative of little importance, Sir P. Francis, wearied out, threw back his head on his chair with a "Well, Sir, well?" The sensitiveness of royalty at once was roused, and the historian proceeded to inflict punishment upon the uncourtly offender by repeating and lengthening his recital, after a connecting sentence, "If Sir Philip will permit me to proceed."—A less exalted performer in the same kind having on another occasion got him into a corner, and innocently mistaking his agitations and gestures for extreme interest in the narrative which he was administering to his patient, was somewhat confounded when the latter, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed with an oath that "Human nature could endure no more."—In all this there was a consistency and an uniformity that was extremely racy and amusing. He is not now present to cry out, "What does that mean, Sir? What would you be at? No gibberish!" and therefore it may be observed that there was something exceedingly *piquant* in this character.*

He was in very deed "a character," as it is called. By this is meant, a mind cast in a peculiar mould, and unwilling either to be remodelled and recast, or to be ground down in the mill of fashion, and have its angles and its roughnesses taken off so as to become one of the round and smooth and similar personages of the day, and indeed of all times and almost all nations. Such characters are further remarkable for ever bearing their peculiarities about with them, so as at all seasons and on all subjects to display their deviations from unlikeness to other men. Such persons are of necessity extremely amusing; they are rare, and they are odd; they are also ever in keeping and consistency with themselves as they are different from others. Hence they acquire, beside entertaining us, a kind of claim to respect, because they are independent and self-possessed. But they are almost always more respected than they at all deserve. Not only are many of their peculiarities the results of indulgence approaching to affectation, so as to make them little more than a respectable kind of buffoons, enjoying the mirth excited at their own expense, but even that substratum of real originality which they have without any affectation, commands far more respect than it is entitled to, because it wears the semblance of much more independence than belongs to it, and while it savours of originality is really only peculiar and strange. Sir Philip Francis had many much higher qualities; but his singularities were probably what chiefly recommended him in society.

The first Lord Holland had been Dr. Francis's patron, and to him his Demosthenes was dedicated. Through him, too, the son obtained his first promotion, a place in the Foreign office, which afterwards

* "Le réjouissant caractère de ce docteur,"—says Le Sage.

led to one in the War Department. Nor did he ever through life forget this early patronage—neither the present nor the former Lord, neither his own friend, nor his father's friend did he ever forget. On his return from India, which he quitted with a character of unsullied purity far more rare in those days than in our own, he thus became naturally connected with the Whig party, flourishing under the illustrious son of his own and his father's patron. On all Indian questions he was of the greatest use, and of the highest authority. But his exertions were not confined to these. His general opinions were liberal and enlightened; he was the enemy of all corruption, all abuse, all oppression. His aid was never wanting to redress grievances, or to oppose arbitrary proceedings. When examined as a witness on the High Treason Trials in 1794, Mr. Horne Tooke, being for no conceivable reason dissatisfied with his evidence, used in private and behind his back to represent him as having flinched from bearing testimony to the character of his brother Reformers. The drama of examination which he was wont to rehearse was a pure fiction, and indeed not only never was performed, but, by the rules of procedure, could not have been represented; for it made the party producing Sir P. Francis as a witness subject him to a rigorous cross-examination.

To go out as Governor-General of India was always the great ambition of his life, and when, on Mr. Pitt's death, the Whig party came into office, he believed the prize to be within his grasp. But the new ministers could no more have obtained the East India Company's consent, than they could have transported the Himalaya mountains to Leadenhall-street. This he never could be made to perceive: he ever after this bitter disappointment regarded Mr. Fox as having abandoned him; and always gave vent to his vexation in terms of the most indecent and almost insane invective against that amiable and admirable man. Nay more—as if the same grievance which alienated his reason, had also undermined his integrity, that political virtue which had stood so many rude assaults both in Asia and in Europe, had been found proof against so many seductions of lucre, so many blandishments of rank, and had stood unshaken against all the power both of Oriental satraps and of English dictators, is known to have yielded for a moment to the vain hope of obtaining his favourite object, through the influence of the man whom, next to Mr. Pitt, he had most indefatigably and most personally opposed. A proposition made to Lord Wellesley by him, through a common friend, with the view of obtaining his influence with Lord Grenville, supposed erroneously to be the cause of his rejection as Governor-General, was at once and peremptorily rejected by that noble person, at a moment when Sir P. Francis was in the adjoining room, ready to conclude the projected treaty. If this casts some

shade over the otherwise honest and consistent course of his political life, it must be remembered that for the very reason of its being a single and a passing shade, the effect on his general estimation is exceedingly slight.

In parliamentary debates Sir P. Francis did not often take a part. The few speeches which he did make, were confined to great occasions, unless where Indian subjects came under discussion, and they were distinguished by the same purity of style and epigrammatic tone which marks his writings. It was chiefly as concerned in the party manifestoes and other publications of the Whigs, that he formed a considerable member of their body. In council, except for boldness and spirit, in which he was ever exuberant, there could be but little benefit derived from one so much the slave of personal antipathy and prejudice, so often the sport of caprice, so little gifted with calm, deliberative judgment. But he saw clearly; he felt strongly; he was above mean, paltry, narrow views; and he heartily scorned a low, tricking, timid policy. The Opposition never were so free from tendencies in that bad direction as not to benefit by the manly and worthy correction which he was always ready to administer; and if they had oftener listened to his councils, or dreaded his resentment, the habit of making war upon the Crown without conciliating the people, of leading on the country to the attack with one eye turned wistfully towards the Court, would never have become so confirmed, or worked such mischief as it did under the leadership of the aristocratic Whigs.

One peculiarity of Sir P. Francis's character has not been mentioned, and yet were it left out, the sketch would both imperfectly represent his failings, and omit a great enhancement of his merits. His nature was exceedingly penurious, and, like all men of this cast he stooped to the smallest savings. His little schemes of economy were the subject of amusing observation to his friends; nor did they take much pains to keep from his knowledge an entertainment in which he could not very heartily partake. But if he stooped to petty savings, he never stooped one hair's breadth to undue gains; and he was as sparing of the people's money as of his own. If avarice means a desire of amassing at the expense either of other men's stores or of a man's own honour, to avarice he was a stranger; and it justly raised him in all reflecting men's esteem, to consider that he who would take a world of pains to save half a sheet of paper, had been an Indian satrap in the most corrupt times, and retired from the barbaric land washed by Ormus and Ind, the land of pearls and gold, with hands so clean and a fortune so moderate, that, in the fiercest storms of faction, no man ever for an instant dreamt of questioning the absolute purity of his administration.

It remains to mention the belief which has of late years sprung

up, that Sir P. Francis lay concealed under the shade of a great name, once the terror of kings and their ministers,—the celebrated Junius. Nor can these remarks be closed without adverting shortly and summarily to the circumstantial evidence upon which this suspicion rests.

There is a singularly perfect coincidence between the dates of the letters and Sir P. Francis's changes of residence. The last letter, in 1772, is dated May 12, and was received some days before by Woodfall. Another letter mentions his having been out of town some time before; there had been an interval in the correspondence of some weeks; his father was then ill at Bath; and on the 23d of March, he was dismissed from the War Office. That he went to Bath then, before going abroad, is very likely; that he remained on the Continent till the end of the year is certain; and no letter of Junius appeared till January, 1773. His appointment to Bengal was soon after in agitation, for it must have been arranged before June, when it was finally made.

Again—he was in the War Office from 1763 to 1772, and Junius evinces on all occasions a peculiar acquaintance with, and interest in, the concerns of that department. Three clerks of much importance there, of no kind of note beyond the precincts of the Horse Guards, are spoken of with great interest and much bitterness occasionally. One of them is the object of unceasing personal attack, one whose very name had now perished but for this controversy,—a Mr. Chamier; and he is abused under all the appellatives of contempt by which familiars in the department might be supposed to have known him. Moreover, no less than four letters on this person's promotion are addressed to Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War, and these all under other signatures; obviously because such a fire on such a subject would have directed the attention of its objects to the War Office, in connexion with so important a name as Junius, whom we find expressing great anxiety to Woodfall that the circumstance of these War Office letters being written by the author of Junius's Letters should be kept carefully concealed. Nevertheless, this may have transpired, and enabled Lord Barrington to trace the authorship into the office. The fact is certain, that, after January, 1773, Junius wrote no more, and that Mr. Francis, the clerk lately dismissed, was sent out a member of Council to Calcutta.

But the War Office is not the only department in which Junius showed a peculiar interest. The Foreign Office also appears to have shared his regard, and been familiar to him, from various passages both in his public and private correspondence with Woodfall. Now, before he was placed at the Horse Guards, Sir Philip Francis had been nearly four years a clerk in that department.

It is remarkable that Junius generally shows great regard, and at all times much forbearance towards the family of Lord Holland,

even when most devoted to Lord Chatham, their powerful adversary. This tallies with the relation in which Sir P. Francis stood to Lord Holland. His father had been his domestic chaplain, and the son owed to him his first appointment. Junius seems also by numberless proofs to have had a singular personal kindness for, and confidence in, Woodfall, and none at all for the other publishers, through whom, under various signatures, he addressed the country. Now, Sir P. Francis was a schoolfellow of Woodfall, and they were on friendly terms through life, though they seldom met. Junius seems to have been apprehensive that Woodfall suspected who he was; for, in one of his private notes, he entreats him "to say, candidly, whether he knew or suspected who he was."

It is known that Junius attended in the gallery of the House of Commons, and he has occasionally quoted the debates from his own notes or recollections. Sir. P. Francis did the same, and he communicated his notes to Almon, for his life of Lord Chatham; there is a remarkable coincidence with Junius in some passages given by both, necessarily unknown to each other, and unaccountable unless they were one and the same person.

All these and other matters of external evidence of a similar description, make out a case of circumstantial proof, sufficiently striking, and strong enough to render the identity highly probable. Is the internal evidence equally strong? It is the singularity of this question, that, whereas in almost all other cases the proof rests chiefly, if not wholly, on comparison of styles, and there is little or no external evidence either way, here, in proportion as the latter is abundant, the former is scanty. No doubt peculiar turns of expression are everywhere to be found the same in both; and even where the phrase is of a somewhat extraordinary kind; "*of* his side," "so far *forth*," "I *mean* the public cause" (for I would promote). There is also much of Sir P. Francis's very peculiar manner and hasty abrupt temper in the private communications with Woodfall, with many phrases common to those communications and Sir Philip's known writings and conversation. But here, perhaps, the similarity may be said to end. For there cannot be produced any considerable piece of composition known to have proceeded from Sir P. Francis's pen which is of the same kind with the Letters of Junius; although passages of great excellence, full of point, instinct with severity, marked by an implacable spirit, and glowing with fierce animation, have been selected for the just admiration of critics; such as his invective against Lord Thurlow, his attack upon the legal profession in the debate on the continuation of impeachment after a dissolution, and his defence of himself against Lord Kenyon's remarks. That these and others of his writings (for though these were spoken, they bear all the marks of preparation, and were

couched in a written style) were of far lesser merit than the Letters in point of composition, no person of correct taste can doubt. But they were not written in the peculiar style of Junius, and could not be mistaken for the productions of the same much over-rated pen.

It remains, while the question thus hangs in suspense, to mention the evidence of hand-writing. The comparison of Sir P. Francis's ordinary hand, which was a remarkably fine one, with the studiously feigned hand of Junius's Letters, and of all his private correspondence, seemed to present many points of resemblance. But a remarkable writing of Sir P. Francis was recovered by the late Mr. D. Giles, to whose sister he had many years before sent a copy of verses with a letter written in a feigned hand. Upon comparing this fiction with the fac-similes published by Woodfall of Junius's hand, the two were found to tally accurately enough. The authorship is certainly not proved by this resemblance, even if it were admitted to prove that Sir P. Francis had been employed to copy the letters. But the importance of the fact, as a circumstance in the chain of evidence, is undeniable.

To this may be added the interest which he always took in the work. Upon his decease, the vellum-bound and gilt copies, which formed the only remuneration he would receive from the publisher, were sought for in vain among his books. But it is said that the present which he made his second wife on their marriage was a finely bound copy of Junius.

The cause of his carefully concealing his authorship, if indeed he was the author, will naturally be asked. No one can tell very certainly, but many reasons may be supposed; and it is quite certain that he himself ever regarded the supposition as a great impeachment of his character. Had he been on habits of intimacy with the objects of Junius's attacks, at the time of those attacks? Had he ever been under personal obligations to them? A promise of secresy, given when he was appointed to India, would only account for his concealing the fact, not for his indignation in denying it. That he was silenced by that appointment is another reason why he might not be ready to confess the truth. Add to all this, that they who knew him were aware how greatly superior he deemed many of his own writings to the much better known and more admired letters of his supposed representative.

There were those who, refining upon things, drew an argument in favour of his authorship from the manner of his denial. These reasoners contended that he never plainly and distinctly denied it. But this only arose from his feeling it to be an imputation, and therefore that he was bound to do a great deal more than disclaim—that it behoved him at least to repel with warmth. That his answer

to all such questions implied and contained an unequivocal denial cannot be doubted. To one he said, "I have pleaded not guilty, and if any one after that chooses to call me a scoundrel, he is welcome." To another, who said "I'd fain put a question to you," he exclaimed, "You had better not; you may get an answer you won't like." To a third, "Oh, they know I'm an old man, and can't fight."

It is equally true that these answers are not inconsistent with the supposition of his having had a knowledge of the secret, and even been engaged in the copying of the letters, without being their author; and it must be added that the same supposition tallies also with the greater part, if not the whole, of the circumstances above detailed. In this belief it is upon the whole, perhaps, both most reasonable and most charitable to rest. If he felt the imputation of the authorship to be so grievous a charge against him, he has full right to plead the integrity and honour of his whole life in vindication from the main accusation, while his only being privy to the secret would imply no criminality at all, and his having had a merely mechanical share in the publication might be accounted for by private authority or by official or personal relationship.

From the purport of the preceding pages will be gathered an opinion upon the whole considerably lower of this distinguished individual than may be found embodied in the panegyrical portraiture of Mr. Burke's speech on the India Bill. It would not be correct to speak even as regards Indian affairs of "his deep reach of thought, his large legislative conceptions, his grand plans of policy," because the mind of Sir Philip Francis was not framed upon a model like this, which might serve for the greatest genius that ever shone upon state affairs. It is also an exaggeration for Mr. Burke and his colleagues to affirm that "from him all their lessons had been learnt, if they had learnt any good ones." But the highest part of the eulogy rises into no exaggeration.—"This man, driven from his employment, discountenanced by the directors, had no other reward and no other distinction but that inward 'sunshine of the soul,' which a good conscience can always bestow on itself."

MR. HORNE TOOKE.

MENTION has been made of the enmity which Mr. Horne Tooke always bore towards Sir Philip Francis; and it is not to be forgotten, among the circumstances which tend to connect the latter with Junius, that a fierce controversy had raged between the author of the Letters and the great grammarian; a controversy in which, although

no one now doubts that the former was worsted, yet certainly the balance of abuse had been on his side, and the opinion of the public at the time was generally in his favour. Another circumstance of the same description is the zeal with which Sir Philip Francis always espoused the quarrel of Wilkes, as vehemently as he made war on Lord Mansfield. Few who recollect the debates of 1817 can forget the violence with which he attacked a member of the House of Commons for having said something slighting of Wilkes, while the eulogy of Lord Mansfield that accompanied the censure did not certainly recommend it to Sir Philip's palate. "Never while you live, Sir, say a word in favour of that corrupt judge."—"It was only the eloquence of his judgment on Wilkes's case that was praised."—"But the rule is never to praise a bad man for anything. Remember Jack Lee's golden rule, and be always abstemious of praise to an enemy. Lord Mansfield was sold on the Douglas cause, and the parties are known through whom the money was paid. As for Wilkes, whatever may be laid to his charge, joining to run him down, is joining the enemy to hurt a friend." Sir P. Francis's instinctive rage on such subjects as the author of Junius must have felt most deeply upon was very remarkable. The last greatest effort which that shallow, violent, and unprincipled writer made, was against the illustrious judge, and it was attended with a signal discomfiture, sufficient to account for his ceasing to write under a name thus exposed to contempt for an arrogance which no resources sustained. Hence the bitterness with which the name of Mansfield was recollected by Sir P. Francis, suited exceedingly well the hypothesis of his identity with Junius; and Horne Tooke's hatred of Francis seems to betoken a suspicion, on his part, of some connexion with the anonymous writer. His warfare with Wilkes, whom both Junius and Francis always defended, is as well known as his controversy with Junius.

No man out of office all his life, and out of parliament all but a few months of its later period, ever acted so conspicuous a part in the political warfare of his times as Horne Tooke. From his earliest years he had devoted himself to the cause of liberty, and had given up the clerical profession because its duties interfered with secular controversy, which he knew to be his proper element. With the pursuits of the bar he perhaps unjustly conceived that this kind of partisanship could be more easily reconciled; but the indelible nature of English orders prevented him from being admitted a member of the legal profession; and he was thus thrown upon the world of politics and of letters for an occupation. His talents in both these spheres were of a high order. To great perspicacity, uncommon quickness of apprehension, a ready wit, much power of application, he joined a cautious circumspection, and calm deliberation, not often found in such company, and possessed a firmness of

purpose not to be daunted by any danger, a steady perseverance not to be relaxed by difficulties, but rather to be warmed into new zeal by any attempts at opposition. That he was crafty, however, as well as sagacious and reflecting, soon appeared manifest; and when he was found often to put others forward on the stage, while he himself prompted behind the scenes, or moved the wires of the puppet, a distrust of him grew up which enabled plain dealers, pursuing a more straightforward course, to defeat him when they happened to fall out, although their resources were in every respect incomparably less extensive. Notwithstanding this defect, fertile in expedients, bold in council, confident of his own powers, his influence was very great with the popular party, to whom indeed he was largely recommended by the mere facility of writing when compositions were wanted on the spur of the occasion, and the power of attacking their adversaries and defeating their friends, through the press, now first become a great engine of political force. For many years therefore he was the adviser and partisan of greatest weight among the high liberty party, that body which numbers its supporters out of doors by the million, and yet is often almost unrepresented in either house of parliament; that body which regards the interests of the people, in other words its own interests, as everything, and the schemes, the tactics, the conflicts, of the regular parties, as nothing, except a proof of Party being a game played for the interests of a few under the guise of public principle.

Personal considerations, as well as strongly-entertained opinions, gave this view of Party a strong hold over Mr. Tooke's mind. He had never become acquainted with the Whig leaders, except in conflict. With those of the opposite faction of course he never could amalgamate. The aristocratic and exclusive nature of Whig society, the conviction then prevailing, and at all times acted upon, that the whole interests of the state are wrapt up in those of "the party," while those of the party are implied by the concerns of a few great families, their dependants, and their favourites,—was sure to keep at an unpassable distance one who, like Mr. Tooke, felt his own real importance, was unwilling to measure it by the place he held in the estimation of some powerful lord or more puissant lady, and was determined not to substitute for it the base nominal value attached to obsequious servility.

In many of their objections to the regular parties in the state, Horne Tooke, and those with whom he acted, were very possibly right; and the friends of liberal principles certainly have had abundant reason to lament the misconduct of that party which came the nearest themselves in the line of policy they approved. But it would be the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that those persons had any claims to superior patriotism, on the ground of abjuring all party

association, or even that they conducted their own affairs as a faction upon less exclusive principles. The people at large, whom they counselled and generally led, might well object to the abuse of the party principle, and might deny the right either of Whig or Tory to dictate their opinions; but Mr. Tooke and his friends, who assumed to be the popular leaders, were banded together in as regular and compact a body as ever flocked under the standards of the Government or the Opposition; they acted together in concert; they gave up lesser differences of individual opinion for the purpose of joining to gain some greater advantage on grounds common to all; nay, they were as jealous of any Whig interference as the Whigs could be of them; and had a coterie of their own, with all the littlenesses of such assemblages, just as much as Devonshire House or Holland House. The table of some worthy alderman was at one time their resort; the country residence of an elderly gentleman, who intended to leave Mr. Horne his fortune, but only gave him his name of Tooke, was afterwards their haunt; latterly, the residence of the grammarian himself received the initiated; and it was still more rare, perhaps, to see a regular Whig face in any of those very patriotic and very select circles than to meet Mr. Tooke himself under the roof of the patricians. The acquisition of office was, perhaps, much less the object in view with those popular chiefs; it certainly was placed at a far greater distance from their grasp; but they had as little tolerance for any difference of opinion with their own creed, as little charity for the errors of those who went half-way with them towards their goal, and as great contempt or dislike of their persons, as if they had gone under any of the appellatives which distinguish the parliamentary divisions of politicians.

That Mr. Tooke could take the field in political conflict as well as rule the councils of the people by his wisdom, was constantly made sufficiently apparent. If the pen of a ready writer were wanted, none more ready to take up whatever gauntlet the literary enemies of freedom might throw down, or to rouse the sleeping lion of state prosecution. If the scene of the fight lay on the Hustings, the Parson of Brentford was one of the most skilful and readiest to address the gathered multitude. If, in either capacity, as a writer or as a speaker, he came within the fangs of the law, those who kept him from conducting the suits of others soon found that he was the most able and skilful advocate of his own. Whether the contest were to be maintained with the scribes of the Treasury through the press, or its candidates at public meetings, or its lawyers in the courts of justice, he was ready with his pen, his tongue, his learning; and he seldom left any antagonist reason to gratulate himself on the opponent he had met or the victory he had won. His conduct of his own defence, against a prosecution for libel at the breaking out of the American

war, when he had no assistance of counsel; and his cross-examination of the witnesses, when tried for High Treason in 1794, having the powerful aid of Mr. Erskine, were both justly admired, as displaying great address, readiness, presence of mind, and that circumspection which distinguished him in all situations, making him a far more safe counsellor than the high popular party almost ever at any other time possessed.

But it was not in action only that he distinguished himself, and gained great and deserved popularity. He suffered and suffered much for his principles. A bold and a just denunciation of the attack made upon our American brethren, which now-a-days would rank among the very mildest and tamest effusions of the periodical press, condemned him to a prison for twelve months, destined to have been among the most active of his life. His exertions to obtain parliamentary reform and good government for the country, accompanied with no conspiracy, and marked by no kind of personal or party violence, subjected his house to be ransacked by police officers, his repositories to be broken open, his private correspondence to be exposed, his daughters to be alarmed and insulted, his person, now bent down with grievous infirmities, to be hurried away in the night, undergo an inquisitorial examination before a secret council, be flung into prison, and only released after months of confinement, and after putting his life in jeopardy by a trial for High Tresaon. These are sufferings which fair-weather politicians know nothing of, which the members of the regular parties see at a distance, using them for topics of declamation against their adversaries, and as the materials for turning sentences in their holiday speeches—but they are sufferings which make men dear to the people; which are deeply engraved on the public mind; which cause them to be held in everlasting remembrance and love and honour by all reflecting men; because they set the seal upon all professions of patriotism, and, bolting the wheat from the chaff in the mass of candidates for public favour, show who be they that care for their principles, by showing who can suffer for them, and tell with a clear voice upon whom it is safe to rely as the votaries of public virtue.

That Mr. Tooke should after these trials have remained out of Parliament, to enter which he made so many attempts, could only be accounted for by the corrupt elective system which was then established. No sooner had a partial reform been effected than Cobbett and even Hunt found a seat for populous places. But the only time that Mr. Tooke ever sat in the House of Commons he was returned by the most close of all close boroughs, Old Sarum itself, then the property of Lord Camelford, the most harmless of whose vagaries was placing this eminent person in parliament. The old objection however of holy orders being indelible, was now revived; and though it was not determined that he whom it had prevented from practising as

a lawyer was thereby also incapacitated from exercising the functions of a legislator, yet a declaratory act was passed which prevented any priest from ever after sitting in the House of Commons. The act was so far retrospective that it affected all persons then in orders.

By this proceeding neither Mr. Tooke nor the country sustained any loss. His talents appeared not to be, at least now that he had reached a late period of life, well fitted for Parliamentary debate. On the hustings he had shone with great brilliancy. Even in the warfare of the bar he was well calculated to excel. For addressing the multitude with effect he had many of the highest qualifications. Without any power whatever of declamation, with no mastery over the passions, with a manner so far from ever partaking at all of vehemence that it was hardly animated in the ordinary degree of conversation, he nevertheless was so clear in his positions, so distinct in his statements of fact, so ready in his repartee, so admirably gifted with the knowledge of what topics would tell best on the occasion, so dexterous in the employment of short, plain, strong arguments, so happy in the use of his various and even motley information, could so powerfully season his discourse with wit and with humour, and so boldly, even recklessly, handle the most perilous topics of attack, whether on individuals or on establishments, that it may be doubted if any man in modern times, when the line has been drawn between refined eloquence and mob oratory, ever addressed the multitude with more certain, more uniform success. Whoever reads the speeches at the different Westminster elections of 1790, 1796, and 1802, when he stood against both the Government candidate and Mr. Fox, will at once perceive how vastly superior his were to those of the other speakers. But, as Mr. Fox was generally very unsuccessful on such occasions, this comparison would furnish an inadequate notion of his great merits in this kind. It is more material to add, that his slow, composed manner, and clear enunciation, enabling what he said to be easily taken down, the reports which are penned convey a very accurate idea of the singular degree in which he excelled. On the other hand, he was peculiarly fitted for the very different contests of forensic skill, by his learning, his subtlety, his quick and sure perception of resemblances and of diversities, which with his unabashed boldness, his presence of mind, and his imperturbable temper, made him a most powerful advocate, whether before a judge in arguing points of law, or in the conduct of the inquiry for a jury's decision. That he was wholly impregnable in the position which he took, both the Court felt when its efforts to stop him or turn aside his course were found to be utterly vain, and the opposing advocate who never for an instant could succeed in putting him down with the weight of authority and of station, any more than in circumventing him by the niceties of technical lore. All that the Mans-

fields and the Bullers could ever effect, was to occasion a repetition, with aggravating variations, of the offensive passages; all that Attorney-Generals could obtain, was some new laughter from the audience at their expense. Unruffled by the vexation of interruptions, as undaunted by power, by station, by professional experience, by the truly formidable conspiracy against all interlopers, in which the whole bar, almost filling the court on great occasions, really is in a considerable degree, but appears to be in a far larger extent combined,—there stood the layman, rejected as a Barrister, relying only on his own resources, and in the most plain and homely English, with more than the self-possession and composure of a judge who had the whole Court at his feet, uttered the most offensive opinions, garnished with the broadest and bitterest sarcasms at all the dogmas and all the functionaries whom almost all other men were agreed in deeming exempt from attack and even too venerable for observation. That his coolness and boldness occasionally encroached upon the adjoining province of audacity, which might even be termed impudence, cannot be denied. When he would turn the laugh against a person who had offended him, or had defeated him, there was nothing at which he would stick. Thus Mr. Beaufoy having fallen short of his expectations in his evidence to character, or to political and personal intimacy, at the Treason trials, he resented his coldness and refreshed his recollection by a story, invented at the moment. "Was it not when you came to complain to me of Mr. Pitt not returning your bow in Parliament-street?" And in private society he was as unscrupulous in dealing with facts, as has been remarked when speaking of the dislike he bore Sir P. Francis. It was another defect in his forensic exertions that he was apt to be over-refining; but this and other faults need excite little wonder, when we reflect that on those occasions he laboured under the extreme disadvantage of entire want of practice. The wonder is that one, who was only three or four times in a court of justice, should have displayed a talent and a tact of which experienced advocates might have been proud.

When he came into the House of Commons, where earlier in life he certainly would have had great success, he entirely failed. One speech, that in his own case, was favourably received; but on the few other occasions on which he came forward, he was without any dispute unsuccessful. His Hustings habits and topics were entirely unsuited to the more severe genius of the place; and he was too old to lay them aside, that he might clothe himself in the parliamentary attire.

But much and justly as he was distinguished in his own time, both among popular leaders and as a martyr for popular principles, it is as a philosophical grammarian that his name will reach the most

distant ages. To this character his pretensions were of the highest class. Acumen not to be surpassed, learning quite adequate to the occasion, a strong predilection for the pursuit, qualified him to take the first place, and to leave the science, scanty when his inquiries began, enlarged and enriched by his discoveries; for discoveries he made as incontestably as ever did follower of physical science by the cognate methods of inductive investigation.

The principle upon which his system is founded excels in simplicity, and is eminently natural and reasonable. As all our knowledge relates primarily to things, as mere existence is manifestly the first idea which the mind can have, as it is simple without involving any process of reasoning,—substantives are evidently the first objects of our thoughts, and we learn their existence before we contemplate their actions, motions, or changes. Motion is a complex and not a simple idea: it is gained from the comparison of two places or positions, and drawing the conclusion that a change has happened. Action, or the relation between the agent and the act, is still more complex: it implies the observation of two events following one another, but, until we have pursued this sequence very often, we never could think of connecting them together. Those actions which we ourselves perform are yet less simple, and the experience which teaches us our own thoughts must be accompanied with more reflection. As for other ideas of a general or abstract nature, they are still later of being distinctly formed. Hence the origin of language must be traced to substantives, to existences, to simple apprehensions, to things. Having given names to these, we proceed to use those names in expressing change, action, motion, suffering, manners of doing, modes of suffering or of being. Thus verbs are employed, and they are obtained from substantives. Relations, relative positions, comparisons, contrasts, affinities, negatives, exclamations follow; and the power of expressing these is obtained from substantives and from verbs. So that all language becomes simply, naturally, rationally, resolved into substantives as its element, or substantives and verbs, verbs themselves being acquired from substantives.

The simple grandeur of this leading idea, which runs through the whole of Mr. Tooke's system, at once recommends it to our acceptation. But the details of the theory are its great merit; for he followed it into every minute particular of our language, and only left it imperfect in confining his speculations to the English tongue, while doubtless the doctrine is of universal application. He had great resources for the performance of the task which he thus set himself. A master of the old Saxon, the root of our noble language; thoroughly and familiarly acquainted with all our best writers; sufficiently skilled in other tongues ancient and modern, though only generally, and, for any purposes but that of his Anglo-Saxon inquiry, rather

superficially, he could trace with a clear and steady eye the relations and derivations of all our parts of speech; and in delivering his remarks, whether to illustrate his own principles, or to expose the errors of other theories, or to controvert and expose to ridicule his predecessors, his never-failing ingenuity and ready wit stood him in such constant stead, that he has made one of the driest subjects in the whole range of literature or science, one of the most amusing and even lively of books; nor did any one ever take up the Diversions of Purley* (as he has quaintly chosen to call it) and lay it down till some other avocation tore it from his hands.

The success of this system has been such as its great essential merits, and its more superficial attractions combined, might have led us to expect. All men are convinced of its truth; and as every thing which had been done before was superseded by it, so nothing has since been effected unless in pursuing its views and building upon its solid foundations. One only fault is to be found, not so much with the system as with its effects upon the understanding and habits of the ingenious author. Its brilliant success made him an etymologist and grammarian in everything. He became prone to turn all controversies into discussions on terms. He saw roots and derivatives in everything; and was apt to think he had discovered a decisive argument, or solved a political or a metaphysical or an ethical problem, when he had only found the original meaning of a word. Thus he would hold that the law of libel was unjust and absurd because *libel* means a little book; no kind of proof that there may not be a substantive offence which goes by such a name, any more than forgery is denied to be a crime, although the original of the name is the very innocent operation of hammering iron softened in the fire. But he also in the case referred to left wholly out of view half the phrase; for it is certain that libel, or *libellus*, is not the Latin of libel, but *libellus famosus*, a defamatory writing.

But this etymological pedantry was engrafted upon a rich stock of sound and healthy constitutional learning. Few men were better acquainted with the history of his country in all its periods. The antiquities of our language were hardly better known to him, or the changes which it had undergone, than the antiquities and the progress of our mixed constitution. His opinions might be strongly tinged with democracy, but towards a republic he had no leaning whatever; and he erred fully as much in undervaluing the people's capacity of self-government, as in the belief of their having anciently enjoyed more power in the monarchy than they ever possessed. In the virtues of representative government, the great discovery of modern times, by which popular rights are rendered capable of

* Επεα πτεροεντα is the more classical synonyme which it bears.

exercise on a large scale, and a democratic scheme of polity becomes reconcilable with an extensive territory and a numerous community, he had the most entire confidence; but he would have pushed the right of suffrage farther than the education of the people rendered safe; and it was a great inconsistency in his doctrines, that while he held the notion of the whole people governing themselves to be utterly chimerical and absurd, he yet desired to see the whole people yearly select their rulers. Nor can we trace in any of his writings the idea, so natural, and indeed so obviously flowing from his own principles, that in proportion as the people became better informed and more experienced, the extension of their rights becomes safe, and if safe, becomes also just and necessary, until at length they are fitted for a much larger share in managing their own affairs than any merely Parliamentary Reformer has ever yet assigned to them.

Subject to these remarks, and to the further observation, that, like all learned men and legal antiquaries, he set too great store by antiquity, guided himself too much by precedent, and was not sufficiently alive to the necessity of new schemes of policy in an altered and improved state of circumstances, his constitutional knowledge, and the use made of it was of very great value. He was ever ready to stand on the firm ground of right, and to press the claims of men to their legal privileges. He brought many important constitutional questions to a fair issue; he was the patron, the supporter, the fellow-labourer of all who dared to resist arbitrary power, and would make a stand for the rights of man, and the principles of the constitution. In the pursuit of these things he could resist both the frowns of power and the clamours of the mob; and although his life was spent as one among the leaders of the high popular party, he was as often in controversy with others, who having no learning like his, and no discretion to guide them, went extravagant lengths to please the multitude, and as often the object of popular dislike, as he was of favour from the mass of his followers. In his controversy with Wilkes, he showed this courage abundantly: he was clearly in the right; he was attacked in a manner wholly vile and odious by a profligate man, an unprincipled politician; he maintained his ground to the satisfaction of the reasoning and reflecting few; but he was the object of general and fierce popular indignation for daring to combat the worthless idol of the mob.

In private life he was eminently agreeable, and his manners were those of a high-bred gentleman. His conversation was admirably diversified with both wit and argument, ordinary and rare information. Its vice was that of his understanding—a constant pursuit of paradox;—and that of his character—a love of victory, and a carelessness about truth. His etymological renown brought him in contact with many men of letters; and his ancient antagonist, Lord

Thurlow, hopeless of living to see the last part of the Essay on Reporters, proposed to make his acquaintance, that he might discuss its subject with him. They met accordingly, the ex-Chancellor volunteering a visit to Wimbledon, as being by a little the less infirm of the two. A considerable intimacy thus grew up between these veterans, who were probably reconciled, even on political scores, by their common enmity to the powerful minister of the day.

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

We have stepped aside from contemplating the figures of those who had the confidence of George III., and who also presided over the councils of George IV. during the Regency and during his reign, in order to consider three of their opponents; but it is time that we return to survey others of the leading men in whose hands the guidance of the state was placed, until the period towards the end of his reign, when the Tory party was broken up by the differences between Mr. Canning and his colleagues. Those men also belong to the times of George III. They were, like Lord Eldon, the component parts of Mr. Addington's administration, the cabinet which enjoyed his favour more than any he ever had after the dismissal of Lord North; and perhaps it was the mediocrity of their talents, in general, that chiefly recommended them to his regards. For with the exception of Lord Eldon and Lord St. Vincent, the list comprises no great names. Of the "safe and middling men," described jocularly by Mr. Canning, as "meaning very little, nor meaning that little well," Lord Castlereagh was, in some respects, the least inconsiderable. His capacity was greatly underrated from the poverty of his discourse; and his ideas passed for much less than they were worth, from the habitual obscurity of his expressions. But he was far above the bulk of his colleagues in abilities; and none of them all, except Lord St. Vincent, with whom he was officially connected only for a short time, exercised so large an influence over the fortunes of his country. Indeed, scarce any man of any party bore a more important place in public affairs, or occupies a larger space in the history of his times.

Few men of more limited capacity, or more meagre acquirements than Lord Castlereagh possessed, had before his time ever risen to any station of eminence in our free country; fewer still have long retained it in a State, where mere Court intrigue and princely favour have so little to do with men's advancement. But we have lived to see persons of more obscure merit than Lord Castlereagh rise to equal station in this country. Of sober and industrious habits, and become possessed of business-like talents by long experience, he was a person

of the most commonplace abilities. He had a reasonable quickness of apprehension and clearness of understanding, but nothing brilliant or in any way admirable marked either his conceptions or his elocution. Nay, to judge of his intellect by his eloquence, we should certainly have formed a very unfair estimate of its perspicacity. For, though it was hardly possible to underrate its extent or comprehensiveness, it was very far from being confused and perplexed in the proportion of his sentences: and the listener who knew how distinctly the speaker could form his plans, and how clearly his ideas were known to himself, might, comparing small things with great, be reminded of the prodigious contrast between the distinctness of Oliver Cromwell's understanding, and the hopeless confusion and obscurity of his speech. No man, besides, ever attained the station of a regular debater in our Parliament with such an entire want of all classical accomplishment and indeed of all literary provision whatsoever. While he never showed the least symptom of an information extending beyond the more recent volumes of the Parliamentary Debates, or possibly the files of the newspapers only, his diction set all imitation, perhaps all description, at defiance. It was with some an amusement to beguile the tedious hours of their unavoidable attendance upon the poor, tawdry, ravelled thread of his sorry discourse, to collect a kind of *ana* from the fragments of mixed, incongruous, and disjointed images that frequently appeared in it. "The features of the clause"—"the ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation"—"sets of circumstances coming up and circumstances going down"—"men turning their backs upon themselves"—"the honourable and learned gentleman's wedge getting into the loyal feelings of the manufacturing classes"—"the constitutional principle wound up in the bowels of the monarchical principle"—"the Herculean labour of the honourable and learned member, who will find himself quite disappointed when he has at last brought forth his Hercules"—(by a slight confounding of the mother's labour which produced that hero, with his own exploits which gained him immortality)—these are but a few, and not the richest samples, by any means, of a rhetoric which often baffled alike the gravity of the Treasury Bench and the art of the reporter, and left the wondering audience at a loss to conjecture how any one could ever exist, endowed with humbler pretensions to the name of orator.

Wherefore, when the Tory party, "having a devil," preferred him to Mr. Canning for their leader, all men naturally expected that he would entirely fail to command even the attendance of the House while he adressed it; and that the benches, empty during his time, would only be replenished when his highly-gifted competitor rose. They were greatly deceived; they underrated the effect of place and power; they forgot that the representative of a government speaks

"as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." But they also forgot that Lord Castlereagh had some qualities well fitted to conciliate favour, and even to provoke admiration, in the absence of everything like eloquence. He was a bold and fearless man; the very courage with which he exposed himself unabashed to the most critical audience in the world, while incapable of uttering two sentences of anything but the meanest matter, in the most wretched language; the gallantry with which he faced the greatest difficulties of a question; the unflinching perseverance with which he went through a whole subject, leaving untouched not one of its points, whether he could grapple with it or no, and not one of the adverse arguments, however forcibly and felicitously they had been urged, neither daunted by recollecting the impression just made by his antagonist's brilliant display, nor damped by consciousness of the very rags in which he now presented himself—all this made him upon the whole rather a favourite with the audience whose patience he was taxing mercilessly, and whose gravity he ever and anon put to a very severe trial. Nor can any one have forgotten the kind of pride that mantled on the fronts of the Tory phalanx, when, after being overwhelmed with the powerful fire of the Whig opposition, or galled by the fierce denunciations of the Mountain, or harassed by the splendid displays of Mr. Canning, their chosen leader stood forth, and presenting the graces of his eminently patrician figure, flung open his coat, displayed an azure ribbon traversing a snow-white chest, and declared "his high satisfaction that he could now meet the charges against him face to face, and repel with indignation all that his adversaries were bold and rash enough to advance."

Such he was in debate; in council he certainly had far more resources. He possessed a considerable fund of plain sense, not to be misled by any refinement of speculation, or clouded by any fanciful notions. He went straight to his point. He was brave politically as well as personally. Of this, his conduct on the Irish Union had given abundant proof; and nothing could be more just than the rebuke which, as connected with the topic of personal courage, we may recollect his administering to a great man who had passed the limits of Parliamentary courtesy—"Every one must be sensible," he said, "that if any personal quarrel were desired, any insulting language used publicly where it could not be met as it deserved, was the way to prevent and not to produce such a rencounter."—No one after that treated him with disrespect. The complaints made of his Irish administration were well grounded as regarded the corruption of the Parliament by which he accomplished the Union, though he had certainly no direct hand in the bribery practised; but they were entirely unfounded as regarded the cruelties practised during and after the Rebellion. Far from partaking in these atrocities, he

uniformly and strenuously set his face against them. He was of a cold temperament and determined character, but not of a cruel disposition; and to him, more than perhaps to any one else, was owing the termination of the system stained with blood. It is another topic of high praise that he took a generous part against the faction which, setting themselves against all liberal, all tolerant government, sought to drive from their posts the two most venerable rulers with whom Ireland had ever been blessed, Cornwallis and Abercromby. Nor can it be too often repeated, that when his colleagues acting under Lord Clare had denounced Mr. Grattan, in the Lords' Report, as implicated in a guilty knowledge of the rebellion, he, and he alone, prevented the Report of the Commons from joining in the same groundless charge against the illustrious patriot. An intimation of this from a common friend (who communicated the remarkable fact to the author of these pages), alone prevented a personal meeting between the two upon a subsequent occasion.

Lord Castlereagh's foreign administration was as destitute of all merit as possible. No enlarged views guided his conduct; no liberal principles claimed his regard; no generous sympathies, no grateful feelings for the people whose sufferings and whose valour had accomplished the restoration of their national independence, prompted his tongue, when he carried forth from the land of liberty that influence which she had a right to exercise,—she who had made such vast sacrifices, and was never in return to reap any the least selfish advantage. The representative of England among those Powers whom her treasure and her arms had done so much to save, he ought to have held the language becoming a free state, and claimed for justice and for liberty the recognition which he had the better right to demand, that we gained nothing for ourselves after all our sufferings, and all our expenditure of blood as well as money. Instead of this, he flung himself at once and for ever into the arms of the sovereigns —seemed to take a vulgar pride in being suffered to become their associate—appeared desirous, with the vanity of an upstart elevated unexpectedly into higher circles, of forgetting what he had been, and qualifying himself for the company he now kept, by assuming their habits,—and never pronounced any of those words so familiar with the English nation and with English statesmen, in the mother tongue of a limited monarchy, for fear that they might be deemed low-bred, and unsuited to the society of crowned heads, in which he was living, and to which they might prove as distasteful as they were unusual.

It is little to be wondered at, that those potentates found him ready enough with his defence of their Holy Alliance. When it was attacked in 1816, he began by denying that it meant anything at all. He afterwards explained it away as a mere pledge of pacific inten-

tentions, and a new security for the stability of the settlement made by the Congress of Vienna. Finally, when he was compelled to depart from the monstrous principles of systematic interference to which it gave birth, and to establish which it was originally intended, he made so tardy, so cold, so reluctant a protest against the general doctrine of the allies, that the influence of England could not be said to have been exerted at all in behalf of national independence, even if the protest had been unaccompanied with a *carte blanche* to the Allies for all injuries they were offering to particular states in the genuine spirit of the system protested against. The allies issued from Troppau one manifesto, from Leybach another, against the free constitution which had just been established at Naples by a military force co-operating with a movement of the people. On the eve of the Parliament meeting (19th Jan. 1821), Lord Castlereagh delivered a note to the Holy Allies, expressing in feeble and measured terms a very meagre dissent from the principle of interference; but adding a peremptory disapproval of the means by which the Neapolitan revolution had been effected, and indicating very plainly that England would allow whatever they chose to do for the purpose of putting down the new government and restoring the old. It is certain that this kind of revolution is of all others the very worst, and to liberty the most unpropitious. It is also probable that the people of Naples knew not what they sought; nay, when they proclaimed the Spanish Constitution, it is said there was no copy of it found in the whole city. Nevertheless, the same kind of military movement had produced the destruction of the same constitution in Spain, and restored the power and prerogative of Ferdinand; and no exception had ever been taken to it, in that instance, either by the Holy Allies or by England. There could, therefore, be no doubt whatever, that this mode of effecting changes in a government was only displeasing to those parties when the change happened to be of a popular kind, and that a military revolution to restore or to found a despotic government, was a thing perfectly to their liking. Thus faintly dissented from as to the principle, and not even faintly opposed as to the particular instance, the three sovereigns deputed one of their number to march, and the Austrian troops ended, in a few days, all that the Neapolitan army had done in as many hours.

But late in 1822, Spain, or rather Madrid, again became the scene of a revolutionary movement; and the people obtained once more a free form of government. Again the Holy Allies were at work; and, on this occasion, their manifestos were directed to arm France with the authority of the League. First, an army was assembled on the Spanish frontier, under the stale pretext of some infectious disorder requiring a sanatory cordon; the same pretext on which the predecessors of the Holy Allies had in former times surrounded unhappy

Poland with their armed hordes—the only difference being, that an epidemic was in that instance said to be raging among the cattle, and now it was supposed to be the plague among men. A great change had, however, now taken place in the British department of Foreign Affairs. Lord Castlereagh's sudden death had changed Mr. Canning's Indian destination, and placed him both at the head of the Foreign Office, and in the lead of the House of Commons. His views were widely different from those of his predecessor. He was justly jealous of the whole principles and policy of the Holy Alliance; he was disgusted with the courtly language of the crafty and cruel despots, who, under the mask of religious zeal, were enslaving Europe; he was indignant at the subservient part in those designs which England had been playing; and he was resolved that this obsequiousness should no longer disgrace his country. In America, he was determined that the colonies of Spain should be recognised as clothed with the independence which they had purchased by their valour; in Europe, he was fixed in the design of unchaining England from the chariot wheels of the Holy Allies. It is from this portion of his life, and from his having, in 1827, been joined by most of the more considerable Whigs, that men are accustomed to regard Mr. Canning as a man of liberal opinions. In no other respect did he differ from Lord Castlereagh, who was also a steady friend of Catholic Emancipation.

LORD LIVERPOOL.

THE eminent individual whom we have just been surveying,* never rose to the place of ostensible Prime Minister, although for the last ten years of his life he exercised almost all its influence, and was the ministerial leader of the House of Commons. But Lord Liverpool was the chief under whom he served. He presided over the councils of England for a longer time than any other, excepting Walpole and Pitt, and for a period incomparably more glorious in all that is commonly deemed to constitute national renown. He was Prime Minister of England for fifteen years, after having filled in succession almost every political office, from under-secretary of state upwards; and passed his whole life, from the age of manhood, in the public service, save the single year that followed the death of Mr. Pitt. So long and so little interrupted a course of official prosperity was never, perhaps, enjoyed by any other statesman.

* Lord Castlereagh.

But this was not his only felicity. It happened to him, that the years during which the helm of the state, as it is called, was entrusted to his hands, were those of the greatest events, alike in negotiation, in war, in commerce, and in finance, which ever happened to illustrate or to checker the annals of Europe. He saw the power of France attain a pitch altogether unexampled, and embrace the whole of the continent, except Russia alone, hitherto believed safe in her distant position and enormous natural strength; but he saw her, too, invaded, her numerous armies overthrown, her almost inaccessible capital destroyed. Then followed the insurrection of conquered Germany—the defeat of victorious France—the war pushed into her territory—the advance of the allies to the capital—the restoration of the ancient dynasty. By a singular coincidence, having signalized his outset in political life by a supposition which he propounded as possible—a march to Paris—this was then deemed so outrageous an absurdity that it became connected with his name as a *standing* topic of ridicule; yet he lived to see the impossibility realized, was Prime Minister when the event happened, and did not survive the dynasty which he had mainly contributed to restore. Peace was thus brought back, but without her sister, plenty, and intestine discord now took the place of foreign war. He saw the greatest distress which this country had ever suffered in all the departments of her vast and various industry; agriculture sunk down, manufactures depressed to the earth, commerce struggling for existence, an entire stop put to all schemes for lightening the load of the public debt, and a convulsion in the value of all property, in the relations of all creditors and all debtors, in the operation of all contracts between man and man—the inevitable effects of a sudden and violent alteration of the currency, the standard of which his colleagues, twenty years before, had interfered to change. Gradually he saw trade, and agriculture, and industry in all its branches, again revive, but public discontent not subsiding; both in Ireland, which he mainly helped to misgovern, and in England, where he opposed all political improvement, he witnessed the tremendous effects of a people becoming more enlightened than their rulers; and the last years of his life were spent in vain efforts to escape from a sight of the torrent which he could not stem. It made an interlude in this long and varied political scene, that he consented to the worst act ever done by any English monarch, the persecution of his Queen for acts of hers and for purposes of his own, connected with a course of maltreatment to which the history of conjugal misdemeanor furnishes no parallel.

Yet, prodigious as is the importance, and singular as the variety of these events, which all happened during his administration,—and although party ran higher and took a far more personal turn during those fifteen years than at any other period of our political history,—

no minister, nay, few men in any subordinate public station, ever passed his time with so little ill will directed towards himself, had so much forbearance shown him upon all occasions, nay, engaged uniformly so large a share of personal esteem. To what did he owe this rare felicity of his lot? How came it to pass that a station, in all other men's cases the most irksome, in his was easy—that the couch, so thorny to others, was to him of down? Whence the singular spectacle of the Prime minister—the person primarily answerable for any thing which is done amiss, and in fact often made to answer for whatever turns out unluckily through no possible fault of his own, or indeed of any man—should, by common consent, have been exempted from almost all blame; and that whoever attacked most bitterly all other public functionaries, in any department, should have felt it no business of his to speak otherwise than respectfully, if not tenderly, or if not respectfully, yet with mild forbearance of him, who having been all his life in high office, a party to every unpopular and unfortunate proceeding of the government, and never a changeling in any one of his political opinions, even in the most unpopular of all, was now for so many long years at the head of the national councils, and in the first instance, by the law of the constitution and in point of fact, answerable for whatever was done or whatever was neglected?

This question may, perhaps, be answered by observing, that the abilities of Lord Liverpool were far more solid than shining, and that men are apt to be jealous, perhaps envious, certainly distrustful, of great and brilliant genius in statesmen. Respectable mediocrity offends nobody. Nay, as the great bulk of mankind feel it to be their own case, they perhaps have some satisfaction in being correctly represented by those who administer their affairs. Add to this, that the subject of these remarks was gifted with extraordinary prudence, displaying, from his earliest years, a rare discretion in all the parts of his conduct. Not only was there nothing of imagination, or extravagance, or any matter above the most ordinary comprehension, in whatever he spoke (excepting only his unhappy flight about marching to Paris, and which for many years seemingly sunk him in the public estimation)—but he spoke so seldom as to show that he never did so unless the necessity of the case required it; while his life was spent in the business of office, a thing eminently agreeable to the taste, because closely resembling the habits, of a nation composed of men of business. "That's a good young man, who is always at his desk," the common amount of civic panegyric to a virtuous apprentice, was in terms, no doubt, often applied to Mr. Robert Jenkinson. "Here comes a worthy minister, whose days and nights have been passed in his office, and not in idle talking," might be the slight transformation by which this early eulogy was adapted to his subsequent manhood and full-blown cha-

racter. Nor must it be forgotten that a more inoffensive speaker has seldom appeared in Parliament. He was never known to utter a word at which any one could take exception. He was besides (a much higher praise) the most fair and candid of all debaters. No advantage to be derived from a misrepresentation, or even an omission, ever tempted him to forego the honest and the manly satisfaction of stating the fact as it was, treating his adversary as he deserved, and at least reciting fairly what had been urged against him, if he could not successfully answer it. In these respects, Mr. Canning furnished a contrast which was eminently beneficial to Lord Liverpool, with whom he was so often, absurdly enough, compared, for no better reason than that they were of the same standing, and began life together and in the same service. But, in another respect, he gave less offence than his brilliant contemporary. A wit, though he amuses for the moment, unavoidably gives frequent umbrage to grave and serious men, who don't think public affairs should be lightly handled, and are constantly falling into the error that, when a person is arguing the most conclusively, by showing the gross and ludicrous absurdity of his adversary's reasoning, he is jesting and not arguing; while the argument is in reality more close and stringent, the more he shows the opposite position to be grossly ludicrous,—that is, the more effective the wit becomes. But though all this is perfectly true, it is equally certain that danger attends such courses with the common run of plain men. Hence all lawyers versed in the practice of *Nisi Prius*, are well aware of the risk they run by being witty, or ingenious and fanciful before a jury; unless their object be to reduce the damages in an absurd case, by what is called laughing it out of court; and you can almost tell, at a great distance, whether the plaintiff or the defendant's counsel is speaking to the jury, by observing whether he is grave, solemn, and earnest in his demeanour, or light and facetious. Nor is it only by wit that genius offends; flowers of imagination, flights of oratory, great passages, are more admired by the critic than relished by the worthy baronets who darken the porch of Boodle's—chiefly answering to the names of Sir Robert and Sir John; and the solid traders,—the very good men who stream along the Strand from 'Change towards St. Stephen's Chapel, at five o'clock, to see the business of the country done by the Sovereign's servants. A pretty long course of observation on these component parts of Parliamentary audience, begets some doubt if noble passages (termed "fine flourishes") be not taken by them as something personally offensive.

Of course, we speak not of quotations—these, no doubt, and reasonably, are so considered,—especially if in the unknown tongues; though even an English quotation is not by any means safe, and certainly requires an apology. But we refer to such fine passages as

Mr. Canning often indulged himself, and a few of his hearers with; and which certainly seemed to be received as an insult by whole benches of men accustomed to distribute justice at Session—the class of the

—Pannosus vacuis ædilis Ulubris—

—him whom Johnson called (translating)

The wisest justice on the banks of Trent.

These worthies, the dignitaries of the empire, resent such flights as liberties taken with them; and always say, when others force them to praise—"Well, well—but it was out of place. We have nothing to do with King Priam here—or with a heathen god, such as Æolus;—those king of folks are very well in Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil;—but, as I said to Sir Robert, who sat next me, What have you or I to do with them matters? I like a good, plain man of business, like young Mr. Jenkinson—a man of the pen and the desk, like his father before him—and who never speaks when he is not wanted: let me tell you, Mr. Canning speaks too much, by half. Time is short—there are only twenty-four hours in the day, you know."

It may further be observed, that, with the exception of the Queen's Case, there was no violent or profligate act of the Government, nor any unfortunate or unpopular measure, which could not, with some colour of justice, be fixed upon some of Lord Liverpool's colleagues, in ease of himself, if men were thus favourably disposed. Lord Castlereagh was foreign minister, and had conducted our negotiations while abroad in person. He was, therefore, alone held accountable for all the mistakes of that department; and especially for the countenance given to the designs of the Holy Allies. So, notwithstanding his known liberality upon Irish questions, and his equally certain opposition to the cruelties by which the history of the Government during the rebellion of 1798 was disfigured, he had committed the sin, never by Irishmen to be forgiven or forgotten,—the carrying through of the Union, and abating the greatest public nuisance of modern times, the profligate, shameless, and corrupt Irish Parliament. Hence, all the faults and all the omissions of the Ministry, in respect of Irish affairs, were laid upon his single head by every true Irishman; while Lord Liverpool, himself a party to the worst policy of past times, was, in his own person, as head of the Government for so many years, the main obstacle to the repeal of the Penal Code; and yet he escaped all censure in the perspicacious and equitable distribution of Irish justice. For obstructing all Law Reform, and for delay in the administration of justice in practice, Lord Eldon offered a convenient object of attack, and on him all the hostile fire was directed, being thus drawn off from the favourite premier. Even the blunders committed in finance, though belonging to the

peculiar department of the First Lord of the Treasury, were never marked in connexion with any name but Mr. Vansittart's. The boast of prosperity,—the schemes of Bank discount which accompanied it, exacerbating the malady of speculation one year, and the misery of panic the next,—were as much Lord Liverpool's as Mr. Robinson's; but the latter alone was blamed, or ever named in reference to these great calamities. Nay, even the violent revolution suddenly effected in the currency, and effected without the least precaution to guard against the country repaying twenty-five shillings for every twenty shillings borrowed,—was reckoned exclusively the work of Mr. Peel, as if he, being out of office altogether, had been at the head of the Government; while the Whigs stept in to claim their share of the public gratitude and applause for this great, but not very well-considered, operation.

It was curious to observe the care with which, all the while, these selections were made of parties on whom to lay the blame. No popular outcry ever assailed Lord Liverpool. While others were the objects of alternate execration and scorn, he was generally respected, never assailed. The fate that befel him was that which might have mortified others, but well suited his tastes, to be little thought of, less talked about—or if, in debate, any measure was to be exposed—any minister to be attacked—means were ever found, nay, pains were taken, to "assure the House that nothing was meant against the respected nobleman at the head of His Majesty's Government, for whom we all entertain feelings of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*."

Such was the happy lot of Lord Liverpool; such are the comforts which a respectable mediocrity of talents, with its almost constant companion, an extreme measure of discretion in the use of them, confers upon its possessor in lieu of brilliant reputation, with its attendant detraction and hate. While the conqueror mounts his triumphal car, and hears the air rent with the shouts of his name, he hears, too, the malignant whisper appointed to remind him, that the trumpet of fame blunts not the tooth of calumny; nay, he descends from his eminence when the splendid day is over, to be made the victim of never-ending envy, and of slander which is immortal, as the price of that day's delirious enjoyment: and all the time safety and peace is the lot of the humbler companion, who shared his labours without partaking of his renown, and who, if he has enjoyed little, has paid and suffered less.

Accordingly, it is fit that one thing should be added to what has been recorded of the general forbearance exercised towards this fortunate minister: it was nearly akin to neglect or indifference, though certainly not at all savouring of contempt. There was nothing striking or shining in his qualities, which were the solid,

useful, well-wearing ones of business-like habits and information. While great measures were executed, no one thought of Lord Liverpool. When men came to reflect, they found he was still Prime Minister; but he retired so much from public view that he was seldom thought of. Thus, if he had no blame when faults were committed, or things went wrong, so he had no praise for what was well done, or gratitude for many signal successes. He was, in truth, hardly ever considered in the matter.

He was a plain, every-day kind of speaker, who never rose above the range either of his audience or his topic; and chose his topic so as to require no strength of persuasion beyond what he possessed. He was clear and distinct enough, without even, in that first essential of business speaking, being distinguished for his excellence above almost any one who is accustomed to state a case or take part in a debate. His diction was on a level with his matter: it had nothing rare, or adorned, or happy; but though plain enough, it was not pure, or more pure than the sources from which he derived it —the Parliamentary debates, the official dispatches, and the newspapers of the day. If, adopting the middle style, or even the *humile genus dicendi*, he had maintained in his language the standard purity, he would have passed, and justly, for a considerable artist in that kind;—as Swift is always praised for being a model of one style of writing. But it would be very wide, indeed, of the truth to say that the threefold nature of Mr. Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Liverpool, ever presented a model of any thing, except perhaps safe mediocrity: of a pure or correct style, he assuredly was no sample. He "met the question"—when "on his legs" he would take upon himself "to assert, as he had caught the Speaker's eye," that no "influential person" of "his Majesty's actual government," had ever "advocated liberalism," less than "the humble individual who now addressed them," and whose duty it was "to justify the proposed bill." In short, he showed plainly enough that a man might avoid lofty flights, and stick to his native earth, without habitually walking in clean places; and that he who is not bold enough to face the perils of the deep, may hug the shore too close, and make shipwreck upon its inequalities.

In council he was safe if not fertile of expedient. He seldom roused his courage up to bold measures; and was one of the narrow minds whom Lord Wellesley quitted, when he found them resolved neither to make peace nor to wage war with any reasonable chance of success; and whom the prodigious achievements of his illustrious brother, contrary to all probability, and beyond every rational hope, united, with the madness of Napoleon and the severity of a northern winter, to rescue from the position which their puny councils had so well earned, and so richly deserved. He had not the spirit or the

political courage required for great emergencies; yet could he be driven, by the fear of losing office, to patronise the most disgraceful attempt ever made in this country by Royal caprice; and thus encountered the imminent peril of civil war. This is, indeed, the darkest spot in his history; and another is connected with it. He lost his head entirely when the people had defeated a body of the troops at the Queen's funeral; and is understood to have given orders for resorting to extremities—orders to which the cooler courage of the military commanders happily postponed their obedience.

The candour which he ever displayed in debate has been already marked. It was a part of the natural honesty of his character, which power had not corrupted, and no eagerness of Parliamentary warfare could interrupt. His general worth as a man was always acknowledged; and this added very justly to the prevailing good opinion which he enjoyed among his countrymen, almost without distinction of party. It may be gathered from our former observations that we regard this good opinion to have been somewhat overdone; and that justice did not at all sanction the distribution of praise and of blame which the country made between him and his colleagues.

MR. TIERNEY.

Among the supporters of the Addington ministry, though never a member of it, was one who though far enough from filling a first-rate place among statesmen, was still farther from being an inconsiderable person in debate, where he had his own particular line, and in that eminently excelled, Mr. Tierney. He had been bred to the law, was called to the bar, and for a short time frequented the Western circuit, on which he succeeded Mr. Pitt in the office of Recorder, or keeper of the circuit books and funds; a situation filled by the youngest member of the profession on the several circuits each successive year. He soon, however, like his illustrious predecessor, left the hard and dull, and for many years cheerless path, which ends in the highest places in the State, and the most important functions of the Constitution; and devoted himself to the more inviting, but more thorny and even more precarious pursuit of politics; in which merit, if it never fails of earning fame and distinction, very often secures nothing more solid to its possessor; and which has the further disadvantage of leading to power, or to disappointment, according to the conduct or the caprice of others, as much as of the

candidate himself. No man more than Mr. Tierney lived to experience the truth of this remark; and no man more constantly advised his younger friends to avoid the fascinations which concealed such snares and led to those rocks. In truth, no one had a better right to give this warning; for his talents were peculiarly fitted for the contentions of the legal profession, and must have secured him great eminence had he remained at the bar; but they were accompanied with some defects which proved exceedingly injurious to his success as a statesman. He possessed sufficient industry to master any subject, and, until his health failed, to undergo any labour. His understanding was of that plain and solid description which wears well, and is always more at the command of its possessor than the brilliant qualities that dazzle the vulgar. To any extraordinary quickness of apprehension he laid no claim; but he saw with perfect clearness, and if he did not take a very wide range, yet, within his appointed scope, his ideas were strongly formed, and, when he stated them, luminously expressed. Every thing refined he habitually rejected; partly as above his comprehension, partly as beneath his regard; and he was wont to value the efforts of fancy still lower than the feats of subtilty; so that there was something extremely comical in witnessing the contrast of his homely and somewhat literal understanding with the imaginative nature of Erskine, when they chanced to meet in conversation. But if refinement and fancy, when tried upon him apart, met with this indifferent reception, their combination in any thing romantic, especially when it was propounded as a guide of conduct, fared still worse at his hands; and if he ever found such views erected into a test or standard for deciding either on public or on private affairs, he was apt to treat the fabric rather as the work of an unsound mind, than as a structure to be seriously exposed and taken to pieces by argument.

Nevertheless, with all this shunning of fanciful matter, no one's mind was more accessible to groundless imaginations; provided they entered by one quarter, on which certainly lay his weak side as a politician. A man undeniably of cool personal courage; a debater of as unquestioned boldness and vigour—he was timid in council; always saw the gloomy side of things; could scarcely ever be induced to look at any other aspect; and tormented both himself and others with endless doubts and difficulties, and apprehensions of events barely possible, as if in human affairs, from the crossing of a street to the governing of a kingdom, men were not compelled either to stand stock-still, or to expose themselves to innumerable risks,—acting, of course, only on probabilities, and these often not very high ones. It was a singular thing to observe how complete a change the same individual had undergone in passing from the consultation to the debate. The difference was not greater between Erskine out of Court

and in his professional garb. He was firm in the line once taken, against which he had raised a host of objections, and around which he had thrown a cloud of doubts; he was as bold in meeting real enemies as he had been timid in conjuring up imaginary risks; prompt, vigorous, determined, he carried on the debate; and he who in a distant view of it could only descry difficulties and create confusion, when the tug of war approached, and he came to close quarters, displayed an abundance of resources which astonished all who had been harassed with his hesitation, or confounded by his perplexities, or vexed with his apprehensions: he was now found to have no eyes but for the adversary whom his whole soul was bent upon meeting; nor any circumspection but for the possibility of a reply which he was resolved to cut off.

It is probable, however, that this defect in his character as a politician had greatly increased as he grew older. In early times he was among the more forward of the Reformers. When he quitted the bar he offered himself as candidate for several vacant seats and was unsuccessful. He attended the debates at the East India House as a proprietor; and took an active part in them. He was an assiduous member of the "Society of Friends of the People," and drew up the much and justly celebrated petition, in which that useful body laid before the House of Commons all the more striking particulars of its defective title to the office of representing the people, which that House then, as now, but with far less reason, assumed. He contested the borough of Southwark more than once, and was seated ultimately in 1796, and by a Committee before which he conducted his own case with an ability so striking, that all who witnessed it at once augured most favourably of his prospects in the House, and confessed that his leaving the bar had alone prevented him from filling the highest place among the ornaments of Westminster Hall. In that contest, his acuteness, his plain and homely sense, his power of exposing a sophism, of ridiculing a refinement, shone conspicuous; and his inimitable manner,—a manner above all others suited to his style of speaking and thinking, and singularly calculated to affect a popular audience,—was added to the other qualities which he showed himself possessed of, and by which he won and kept hold of the committee's undivided attention.

His entry into the House of Commons was made at a sufficiently remarkable period of time. The Whig Opposition had just taken the most absurd and inconsistent, as well as most unjustifiable step which ever party or public men resorted to, in order to show the bitterness of their disappointment, to justify their enemies in deducing all their actions from selfish motive, and to lend the doctrine some plausibility, which the enemies of all party connexion hold, when they deny its use and regard it as a mere association for interested purposes, not

dictated by any public principles, but disg[illegible] itself falsely and fraudulently in that decent garb. They had [illegible]ed or seceded from their attendance in Parliament, upon the very grounds which should have chained them faster to their seats; namely, that the Government was ruining the interests and trampling upon the liberties of the country; and that the people were not sufficiently alive to the situation of their affairs. If any thing could add to the folly as well as impropriety of this measure, it was the incompleteness of the secession; for instead of leaving Parliament, and thus enabling the people to choose more faithful guardians of their interests, those men all retained their seats, kept fast hold of their personal privileges, and preserved the option of returning, upon any fitting or temporary occasion, to the places which they left empty but open. The Irish Parliament afforded, upon this occasion, one of the two instances of its superiority to our own, which the whole history of that bad and corrupt assembly presents.* The Opposition there, with Mr. Grattan at its head, vacated their seats and remained out of Parliament for some years. Strange that the place where political purity was the most rare,—where true patriotism was ever at its lowest ebb,—where the whole machinery of corruption, all that men call jobbing and factious, was proverbially hereditary and constitutional,—and where it has always been so usual to expect as little correctness of reasoning as consistency and purity of conduct,—an example should have been afforded of just and rational conduct, and self-denial, upon the point of jobbing itself, which the patriots of England were neither wise enough nor disinterested enough to follow! This phenomenon, otherwise hard to be explained, is accounted for by the character of the illustrious man whom we have named as leader of the Irish Whigs.

The absence of the regular chiefs of the Opposition and their followers from Parliament gave Mr. Tierney a ready opening to distinction upon his entering the House of Commons;—an opening of which far less sagacity and resources than he possessed might have taken advantage. He became at once, and from the necessity of the case, in some sort the leader of Opposition. The subject to which he mainly directed himself was the financial department, but without at all confining his exertions to questions of this description. The clearness of his understanding, however, and his business-like habits, gave him a peculiar advantage upon such matters; and he retained his hold over it, and, as it were, an almost exclusive possession of it during the whole of his Parliamentary life. It seems strange to look back upon the hands out of which he took this branch of Opposition business. Mr. Sheridan was the person to whom he succeeded, and who really may be admitted to have been, in every respect, as mo-

* The other was on the Regency, 1788-9.

derately qualified for garbling it as any one of his great abilities could well be. But must not be supposed that the secession of the regular party left all finance questions, or all questions of any kind, in the hands of him whom they considered as an officious unwelcome substitute, and affected to look down upon as an indifferent makeshift in the hands of the Ministers, ever ready to catch at any semblance of a regular opposing party, for the convenience which it affords in conducting the public business. When the Irish Rebellion, and still more when the Union, and soon after the failure of the Dutch Expedition seemed to afford a chance of "doing something," they came down and joined in the debate. To Mr. Tierney was left the wearisome and painful, but not unimportant duty of watching daily the proceedings of the Government, and of the House in which it now ruled with an absolute sway. Whatever was most irksome and laborious, most thankless and obscure in the drudgery of daily attendance, and the discomfiture of small divisions, fell to his share. It was only when the reward of such toils and vexations appeared in view, upon some great occasion presenting itself for assaulting a minister invincible in Parliarment, but defeated with discredit in his schemes, and assailing him with the support of the country as well as of fortune, that Mr. Tierney was quickly nor yet very gently put on one side, to make way for the greater men who had been engaged in any pursuit rather than that of their country's favour, and doing any service but that which they owed to their constituents. With what front they could have offered themselves again to those constituents had a general election befallen them before some change had happened in their policy, it would be difficult to conjecture. But fortunately for them as for the country, the administration of Mr. Addington afforded a fair opportunity, perhaps a pretext, of which they were desirous, for resuming their attendance in Parliament; and no one has ever since, in a tone more audible than a whisper, ventured to mention the experiment of secession, as among the ways and means for bettering the condition of a party. It must, however, be added, that when the Election of 1802 came, the people, by showing an entire forgetfulness of the greatest violation of public duty ever committed by their representatives, and never once mentioning the secession on any one occasion, exhibited an inconstancy and neglect of their own best interests, truly painful to those who deem them not only the object, but the origin of all political power; and who, moreover, hold it to be impossible that any power bestowed upon men can be well or safely executed without a continuance of wholesome popular control. The comfort which we now have under this unpleasant recollection, is derived from an assurance that such never could be the case in the present times. No man, or class of men, dare now leave their Parliamentary post, with-

out at the same time throwing up their [illegible]ated trust; and whoever should attempt to repeat the game of 17[illegible] in our times, would find the doors of Parliament closed against him, should he be rash enough again to seek admission through any place having a real body of electors.

In the times of which we have been speaking, Mr. Tierney was one of those Whigs who, partly through hostility to Mr. Pitt, and partly from a sincere gratitude for the peace abroad, and the mild and constitutional government at home, obtained for the country by Mr. Addington, first supported, and afterwards formally joined that Minister, upon his rupture with his patron and predecessor. It was unfortunate that Mr. Tierney should have taken office almost on the eve of his new leader committing as great an error, and as fatal as ever could be imputed to his warlike adversary. Mr. Addington having been joined by Mr. Tierney late in 1802, plunged the country, early in 1803, again into war; for reasons which, if they had any force, should have prevented him from making peace the year before; and even if Napoleon was desirous of breaking the treaty, care was taken by the manner of the quarrel which we fastened upon him, to give him every appearance, in the eyes of the world, of having been reluctantly forced into a renewal of hostilities.

The removal of Mr. Tierney from the Opposition to the Ministerial benches was not attended with any increase either of his weight in the country, or of his powers in debate. No man certainly had a right to charge him with any violation of party duty; for he had never been connected with the regular Whig Opposition, and had been treated upon all occasions with little respect by their leaders. Yet in his opinions he agreed with them; they had always professed the same principles upon those great questions, whether of foreign or domestic policy, which divided public men; and he was now in office with statesmen who only differed from those whom he had always opposed, in the inferiority of their capacity—in having done their patrons' bidding by restoring peace and the Constitution, both of which he had suspended,—and in refusing to go out and let him in again when that turn was served. There was little ground then for drawing any distinction between the two classes of Pittites; upon principle none; only a personal difference divided them; and to that difference Mr. Tierney was wholly a stranger, until he chose to take a part in it by taking office upon it. But, as has often happened to men who thus place themselves in what our French neighbours term "a false position," his weight in the House was not more remarkably lessened than his gift of debating was impaired. He never seemed to be thoroughly possessed of himself, or to feel at home, after taking his seat on the Treasury Bench, among the Jenkinsons, the Bragges, the Yorkes, the Percevals, and the other supporters of Mr.

Addington's somewhat feeble, though certainly very useful, administration. It was drolly said of the latter—in reference to the rather useless acquisition which he appeared to have made—that he resembled the worthy but not very acute Lord who bought Punch. Upon more than one occasion, words of a graver character were heard from the great master of sarcasm to convey the same idea. When, in an attempt to defend the naval administration of the Government, against Mr. Pitt's unmeasured attacks, their new champion, with singular infelicity, adventured upon some personal jeers* at their assailant's expense, the latter remarked in very good humour, "That he had not found him quite so formidable an antagonist in his novel situation, though he nowise questioned his capacity for Ministerial exertions, and should wait until his infant aptitudes had expanded to their destined fulness." The overthrow of the Addington Ministry soon restored Mr. Tierney to the ranks of the opposition; and his union with the Whigs afterwards became so complete, that he acted for some years after the death of Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Ponsonby as their real leader in the Commons; and during one session was installed formally as their chief.

The instances to which we have just adverted, may truly be said to be the only failures in Mr. Tierney's whole parliamentary career. For he was one of the surest and most equal speakers that ever mingled in debate; and his style of speaking was very enviable in this particular. It seemed so easy and so natural to the man as to be always completely at his command; depending on no happy and almost involuntary flights of fancy, or moods of mind, or any of the other incidents that affect and limit the inspirations of genius;—hardly even upon fire caught from an adversary's speech, or an accident in the debate, and which is wont to kindle the eloquence of the greater orators. Whoever heard him upon any occasion, had the impression that such he would be upon all; and that whenever he

* If we mention the nature of these attempts, it must be after a very distinct and peremptory protest against being understood to give them as samples of the humour, and indeed wit, in which Mr. Tierney peculiarly excelled—for they were exceptions to it, and were his only failures. He spoke of Mr. Pitt's motion as "smelling of a contract"—and even called him "The Right Hon. Shipwright"—in allusion to his proposal to build men-of-war in the Merchants' Yards. On one occasion he fell by a less illustrious hand, but yet the hand of a wit. When alluding to the difficulties the Foxites and Pittites had of passing over to join each other in attacking the Addington Ministry, Mr. Tierney (forgetting at the moment how easily he had himself overcome a like difficulty in joining that Ministry) alluded to the puzzle of the Fox and the Goose, and did not clearly expound his idea. Whereupon Mr. Dudley North said:—"It's himself he means—who left the Fox to go over to the Goose, and put the bag of oats in his pocket." His failures are told in three lines; but a volume would not hold the successful efforts of his drollery both in debate and in society.

chose it, he could make as good a speech, and of the same kind. Nor was that excellence small, or that description of oratory contemptible. It was very effective at all times; at some times of great force indeed. His power of plain and lucid statement was not easily to be surpassed; and this served him in special stead upon questions of finance and trade, which he so often handled. His reasoning was equally plain and distinct. He was as argumentative a speaker as any one could be who set so little value upon subtilty of all sorts; and who always preferred the shorter roads towards a conclusion, to laboured ratiocination, and quick retorts suggested by the course of the discussion, to anything elaborate or long. In these retorts, whether of allusion, or repartee, or personal attack, his excellence was very great. When occasion required it, he could rise into a strain of effective and striking declamation; and although never attempting any flight of a lofty kind, yet he never once failed to reach whatever he aimed at. His wit, or his humour, or his drollery, it would be very difficult to describe—nor easy to say how it should be classed. Perhaps, of the three words we have used, in order to be sure of comprehending or hitting it, the second is the most appropriate. He had the great requisites of a powerful debater,—quickness in taking his ground and boldness in holding it; and could instantly perceive an enemy's weakness and his own course to take advantage of it. But we now speak of him when on his legs; for the defect in his character, of which we before made mention, followed him into the House of Commons, and he was wanting in decision and vigour there also, until he rose, when a new man seemed to stand before you.

It remains to be said, that no man's private character stood higher in all respects; and, beside the most amiable domestic affections, he showed a very touching patience, and even cheerfulness, in sustaining the distressing attacks of the illness under which he laboured for many of the latter years of his life. He was of strictly religious habits, although without anything of either austerity or fanaticism; and is said to have left some devotional compositions, which prove how deeply impressed his mind was by the feelings connected with the most important of all subjects. It must not be forgotten, in speaking of Mr. Tierney's adherence to the liberal party, during their long and all but hopeless exclusion from office, that he was neither sustained in his independent and honest course by any enthusiasm or fervour of character, nor placed in circumstances which made the emoluments of place indifferent to the comforts of his life. A person of his very moderate fortune, and plain, practical, even somewhat cold habits of thinking, upon questions which warm so many minds into the glow of romantic patriotism, has double merit in perseveringly discharging his public duties, and turning a deaf ear to all the allurements of power.

LORD ST. VINCENT—LORD NELSON.

As it is difficult to find a more correct representation of the Addington ministry than the noble person of whom we have recently been speaking,* so the popularity of that government was, like his, very much owing to the moderation of both its talents and its principles. After the somewhat violent and overbearing, as well as warlike and arbitrary administration of Mr. Pitt, they who both made peace with France, composed the internal dissensions of the country, and restored its free constitution, presented at the same time to its confidence only second-rate genius in every department save two;—a genius diluted and lowered to the moderate standard which suits the public taste. These two exceptions were the Law and the Navy. Of Lord Eldon we have already spoken; the present sketches would be imperfect if Lord St. Vincent were passed over in silence; for he was almost as distinguished among the statesmen as the warriors of his age.

This great captain, indeed, presented a union, as rare as it was admirable, of the brightest qualities which can adorn both civil and military life. He early distinguished himself in the naval profession; and was associated with Wolfe in those operations against Quebec, which crowned our arms with imperishable glory, and loaded our policy with a burden not yet shaken off, though, as Lord St. Vincent early foresaw, becoming every day more difficult to bear. An action which he soon after fought with the *Foudroyant* line-of-battle ship, was the most extraordinary display of both valour and skill witnessed in that war, so fertile in great exploits; and it at once raised his renown to the highest pitch. The peace then came; and it was succeeded by a war, the only one in which the fleets of England reaped no laurels; until just before its close the bravery and seamanship of Rodney retrieved our naval honour. For near twenty years Sir John Jervis was thus unemployed; and in part this neglect must certainly be ascribed to the side in politics which he took,—being a Whig of Lord Shelburne's school,—highly prized and unreservedly trusted by that able, sagacious, and consistent statesman; than whom none ever entered into the combats of public life with an ampler provision of combined capacity and information, and none ever sustained the useful part which he acted, with more unsullied honour. This tribute to truth and justice is due from Whigs to one whom it suited the policy of 1783 to run down by every species

* Lord Liverpool.

of slander, partly in the prose of pamphlets, partly in the verse of pasquinades, partly in the mixed fiction and prose of speeches, —merely because, not belonging to the party, he was audacious enough to act for himself, instead of making himself a tool of those who boasted that they never had confided in him, at the moment they were complaining of his deserting their councils.

While Sir John Jervis remained during this long and eventful period on shore, and unemployed in any branch of the public service, he accomplished himself by constant reading, by much reflection, by the intercourse in which he ever delighted with men of learning and talents, as a statesman of profound views, and of penetration hardly equalled by any other man of his time. His natural acuteness no obstacle could impede; his shrewdness was never to be lulled asleep; his sagacity no man ever found at fault; while his provident anticipations of future events seemed often beyond the reach of human penetration. We shall give a remarkable example of this in a matter of deep interest at the present moment. When Lord Shelburne's peace (1783) was signed, and before the terms were made public, he sent for the Admiral, and, showing them, asked his opinion. "I like them very well," said he, "but there is a great omission." "In what?" "In leaving Canada as a British province." "How could we possibly give it up?" inquired Lord Shelburne. "How can you hope to keep it?" replied the veteran warrior. "With an English republic just established in the sight of Canada, and with a population of a handful of English settled among a body of hereditary Frenchmen.—It is impossible; and rely on it you only retain a running sore, the source of endless disquiet and expense." "Would the country bear it? Have you forgotten Wolfe and Quebec?" asked his Lordship. "Forgotten Wolfe and Quebec? No; it is because I remember both. I served with Wolfe at Quebec; having lived so long, I have had full time for reflection on this matter; and my clear opinion is, that if this fair occasion for giving up Canada is neglected, nothing but difficulty, in either keeping or resigning it, will ever after be known." We give the substance of this remarkable conversation as we have it from more sources of information than one; and the recollection of the parties is confirmed by the tone of the Earl's letters in 1813, which we have seen. There was then no question of a surrender; but he plainly shows the greatest distrust of our being suffered to retain the colony.

When the war broke out in 1793, Admiral Jervis was soon employed on the Mediterranean and Lisbon stations. What wonders he effected with an inadequate force are well known to the profession. All the world is aware of his glorious victory over the Spanish fleet in February, 1797, when he defeated an enemy of nearly three

times his force. Nor is there any one who has not heard of the steady determination of purpose, so characteristic of the man, by which his fleet was made ready to sail from the Tagus in as many hours as all but himself said days would be required for the preparation, after overland advices had arrived at Lisbon of the enemy having put to sea. But the consummate vigour and wisdom of his proceedings during the dreadful period of the Mutiny are no less a theme of wonder and of praise. It was the practice to dispatch mutinous vessels to serve under his orders, and he soon, by his masterly operations of combined mercy and justice, reduced them to order, restoring discipline by such examples as should be most striking, without being more numerous than absolute necessity required. The humane ingenuity of his contrivance, to make one execution produce the effect of many, by ordering it on an unusual day (Sunday morning) is well known. His prompt measures of needful, and no more than the needful severity, were as effectual to quell a formidable mutiny which broke out in the fleet that had just returned from foreign service, and was suddenly ordered to the West Indies to watch the French expedition there. The revolt was at once subdued; the fleet set sail; and there never again was heard the whisper of discontent respecting the painful disappointment to which the men were thus subjected.

When the Addington ministry was formed, he was placed at the head of the Admiralty; and now shone forth in all its lustre that great capacity for affairs with which he was endued by nature, and which ample experience of men, habits of command, and an extended life of deep reflection had matured. He laid the foundation of a system of economical administration which has since been extended from the navy to all the departments of the state. But it was bottomed on a searching scrutiny into the abuses of the existing system. The celebrated "Commission of Naval Inquiry" was his own work, and it both led to numberless discoveries of abuse and extravagance, and gave the example to all the similar inquiries which soon after followed. It did more: it introduced the whole subject of Economical Reform, and made it become, both in and out of Parliament, the principal object for many years of all our patriotic statesmen;—an object which alone they carried through in spite of those ministerial majorities, omnipotent upon every other controversy among the parties in Parliament. It is impossible to calculate what would have been the saving effected to the revenues of this country had Lord St. Vincent presided over any great department of national affairs from the beginning of the war, instead of coming to our assistance after its close. But in proportion to his services in this line of reformation, was the clamour which his operations excited against him. His unsparing rigour, his inflexible justice, his fixed determination to

expose delinquents how high soever—to dispense with useless services, how many hands soever might be flung out of the superfluous and costly employment,—raised against this great and honest statesman a host of enemies, numerous in exact proportion to the magnitude of the objects he had in view, and exasperated in proportion to the unjust gains of which he was depriving them: in other words, the hostilities to which he was exposed was in an exact proportion to his merits. Nor did the gratitude of the country, whom his courage and disinterestedness was thus serving so essentially, at all keep pace with the great benefits which he bestowed. The spirit of party interposed with its baleful influence; and when the Pitt and the Fox parties combined to forget their animosities, for the purpose of unseating Mr. Addington, the ground chosen by the new allies upon which to celebrate their union, and to commence their joint operations, was an attack upon the naval administration of the only great man whom the ministers could boast of having among their number;—the illustrious warrior who, after defeating the enemies of his country by his arms, had waged a yet more successful war against her internal foes, by his vigour as a reformer, his irreconcilable enmity to all abuses, and his resistless energy in putting them down.

It is hardly necessary to add, that of eloquence, or debating power, Lord St. Vincent had nothing whatever; nor to such accomplishments did he lay any claim.. Indeed he held the arts of rhetoric in supreme contempt; always contenting himself with delivering his own opinion when required, in the plainest language—and often expressing what he felt in sufficiently unceremonious terms. Not that he had anything at all of the roughness often found in the members of the naval profession. On the contrary, his manners were those of a highly polished gentleman; and no man had more of the finished courtier in all his outward appearance and demeanour. His extreme courtesy, his admirable address in managing men, the delicacy with which he could convey his pleasure to inferiors, or his dissent to equals, or his remonstrance to superiors, being the external covering of as firm a determination as ever guided a human being, were truly remarkable; and gained for him with persons of superficial observation, or imperfectly acquainted with his character, the reputation of being cunning and insincere; when, in truth, it only arose from a good-natured desire of giving as little needless uneasiness as possible, and raising as few difficulties as he could upon matters foreign to his main purpose. When he went to the Tagus at the head of the expedition and the commission in 1806, the object being, in case Portugal proved indefensible against the threatened French invasion, to make the royal family and principal nobility transfer the seat of government to the Brazils, the proceedings of this Chief, in his twofold capacity of captain and statesman, were justly remarked for the great

talents and address which they exhibited. He began by cutting off all communication between his fleet and the land; this he effected by proclaiming an eight days' quarantine. His colleagues in the Commission having joined him, he still prevented his officers and men from landing, but threw open all his ships to the natives of the place, whose multitudes never ceased pouring through those gallant vessels, lost in admiration of their beauty, their resistless force, and the perfect discipline of their crews. With the court his intercourse now began; and the terror of his name, even without his armament, would there have made him supreme. The reluctance to remove was, of course, universal and deep-rooted; nor could any arrangement the expected invader might offer prove less palatable than expatriation and banishment for life across the Atlantic to pampered voluptuaries, the extent of whose excursions had hitherto been the distance between the town and the country palace. But he arranged everything for their voyage; and he was quite ready to compel their embarkation. His plan would have exposed his own person to some danger, but would have required no application of military force, if nothing was attempted against the fleet. It seemed to have been borrowed from the celebrated seizure, by Cortez, of the Emperor Montezuma's person, in his capital of Mexico; and the very few to whom he communicated it, while struck with the boldness of the design, saw that it was as happy as it was bold, and had no doubt whatever of its perfect success.

Although we have noticed his contempt for the artifices of oratory, it is remarkable that some of his most intimate friends were those who chiefly owed their renown to its practice. Among these was Lord Erskine; and he enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Fox and Lord Grey. But he made a great difference between the eloquence of the senate and the bar—a difference not perhaps marked by his accustomed sagacity and liberal views, yet sufficiently easy to account for. Parliamentary speaking he regarded as mere "talk." He saw the noblest exertions of the orator, and also the speeches of longest duration (a circumstance much fitted to rouse his impatience) end, as he phrased it, in wind. The decision came, which he reckoned the result of the battle, and he could trace no connexion between that and the preceding debate. Hence, he deemed the whole "nonsense," "a farce," "a child's play;" without reflecting that in the long run discussion produces, directly or indirectly, its effect, as he probably would have done had he viewed the scene from what he would call "a safe distance;"—that is, so far off as not to have his early hours interfered with, and his patience assailed by length of speech. The trial of causes he viewed with other eyes. *That* he considered as business—as acting and not talking; and, having the highest admiration for the skill of an advocate, there was no society in which he delighted so

much as that of the bar. To hear his acute and even profound remarks upon the conduct of a cause, and the play of adverse counsel, every point of which, to the most minute and technical, he clearly comprehended and highly relished, was one of the things that impressed the listener with the greatest opinion of his extraordinary capacity. He viewed it as a fine operation of attack and defence; and he often said that there was nothing which he ever more regretted than not having been able to attend the proceedings in the Queen's case.

In recounting the triumphs of his military genius, we have not adverted to the extraordinary promptitude, and powers of combination which he displayed, when he equipped the finest expedition that ever was detached from a fleet, and sent it under Nelson up the Mediterranean. This illustrious hero always acknowledged, with the most affectionate gratitude, how much his victory of the Nile was owing to this grand operation of his chief, for whom he felt and ever testified the most profound veneration. Nor was anything ever more disgustful to his truly noble and generous nature, than the attempts of that tribe, the worst kind of enemies (*pessimum inimicorum genus, laudatores*)—the mean parasites who would pay their court to himself by overrating his services at St. Vincent in 1797, and ascribing to him the glory of that memorable day. Their affection became thus grounded upon thorough knowledge of each other's merits, and the admiration which these commanded was mutual; nor did the survivor once omit an opportunity of testifying the love he bore his illustrious friend, and his grief for the blow which took him from his country. On board his flag-ship, on all those great occasions when he entertained his numerous followers, Nelson's *Dirge* was solemnly performed while they yet surrounded the table; and it was not difficult to perceive that the great warrior's usual contempt for displays of feeling here forsook him, and yielded to the impulse of nature and of friendship.

So little effect on exalted spirits have the grovelling arts of little souls! He knew all the while, how attempts had been made by Lord Nelson's flatterers to set him up as the true hero of the Fourteenth of February; but never for an instant did the feelings towards Nelson cross his mind, by which inferior natures would have been swayed. In spite of all these invidious arts, he magnanimously sent him to Aboukir; and, by unparalleled exertions, which Jervis alone could make, armed him with the means of eclipsing his own fame. The mind of the historian, weary with recounting the deeds of human baseness, and mortified with contemplating the frailty of illustrious men, gathers a soothing refreshment from such scenes as these; where kindred genius, exciting only mutual admiration and honest rivalry, gives birth to no feeling of jealousy or envy, and the

character which stamps real greatness is found in the genuine value and native splendour of the mass, as well as in the outward beauty of the die; the highest talents sustained by the purest virtue; the capacity of the statesman, and the valour of the hero, outshone by the magnanimous heart, which beats only to the measures of generosity and of justice.

Nor let it be deemed any abatement of this praise if the undeniable truth be stated, that no two men in the same professional career, and both of consummate excellence, ever offered more points of marked diversity in all the particulars which distinguish character and signalise the kinds of human genius. Alike in courage, except that the valour of the one was more buoyant, more constitutional—of the other, more the steady result of reflection, and the produce of many great qualities combined, than the mere mode of temperament; —alike without any difference whatever in that far higher quality, moral courage, and political, which is the highest pitch of *it; alike* in perfect nautical skill, the result of talents matured by ample experience, and of the sound judgment which never disdains the most trifling details, but holds nothing trivial connected with an important subject;—yet, even in their professional abilities, these great captains differed: for the more stern mind of the one made him a severe disciplinarian, while the amiable nature of the other seduced him into an habitual relaxation of rules whose rigorous enforcement galled, if it did not wound, his kindlier feelings. Not that either Jervis stooped to the fopperies by which some little minds render the service entrusted to their hands as ridiculous as themselves; or that Nelson failed to exact strict compliance with rules, wherever their *infraction* would be manifestly hurtful: but the habits of the two men upon ordinary occasions were opposite, and might be plainly seen by an inspection of the ships that bore their flags. So, too, Nelson was unequal to the far-seeing preparation and unshaken steadfastness of purpose required to sustain a long-continued operation; and would, therefore, ill have borne the monotony of a blockade, such as that which kept Collingwood for years on shipboard, or that which Jervis maintained off Brest with the Channel fleet. It is also undeniable, that although nothing could exceed the beauty and perfect fitness of his dispositions for action when the whole operations were reduced to their ultimate point, yet he could not, like Jervis, have formed the plan of a naval campaign; or combined all the operations over a large range of coast and sea, making each part support the other, while all conduced to the main purpose. Thus, too, it may be doubted if St. Vincent would have displayed that sudden, almost intuitive promptitude of decision, the result more of an ardent soul than a penetrating sagacity, which led Nelson to his marvellous course from the old world to the new in 1805; when he in an in-

stant discovered that the French fleet had sailed to the West Indies, and, having crossed the Atlantic in chase of them, again discovered that they had returned; and appeared in Europe almost as soon as the enemy arrived, whom the mere terror of his tremendous name had driven before him from hemisphere to hemisphere. That the movements of his illustrious master would have been as rapid, and his decision as prompt, had the conjecture impressed itself on his mind with the same force, none can doubt; and it may be further admitted, that such a peremptory will as the latter showed—such a fixed resolution to be obeyed,—such an obdurate, inflexible, unteachable ignorance of the word "impossible," when any preparation was to be made,—formed no part of Nelson's character; although he showed his master's profound and crass ignorance of that word—the mother tongue of little souls—when any mighty feat was to be done, such as souls like these cannot rise to comprehend. He who fought the great fight with the *Foudroyant*, would have engaged his Spanish first-rates, had his flag off St. Vincent floated like Nelson's over a seventy-four; but Nelson could not have put to sea in time for intercepting the Spanish fleet, any more than he could have cured or quelled the mutinous contagion which infected and distracted Jervis's crews on the eve of the action.

If, even in a military view, these great warriors thus differed, in all other respects they are rather to be contrasted than compared. While it was hard to tell whether Jervis excelled most in or out of his profession, Nelson was nothing on shore—nay, had weaknesses, which made the sea air as necessary, if not to his mental condition, at least to his renown, as it is to the bodily health of some invalids. The great mind of the one was the natural ally of pride; the simpler nature of the other became an easy prey to vanity. The latter felt so acutely the delight of being loved and admired by all—for to all he was kind himself,—that he could not either indulge in it with moderation, or conceal it from the world. Severely great, retiring within himself, occupied with his own reflections, the former disregarded the opinion of those whom he felt destined to command; and only descended to gain men's favour that he might avail himself of their co-operation, which he swiftly converted into service. While Nelson thought aloud, Jervis's words were little apt to betray the feelings that ruled, or the meditations that occupied his mind. The one was great only in action; the other combined in a rare, perhaps an unexampled manner, all the noble qualities which make council vigorous and comprehensive, with those which render execution prompt and sure. In the different temper of the men's minds, you could easily tell that the one would be generally popular, from the devotion which the multitude always pay to brilliant valour, and the affection which a gentle, kind, and innocent nature is calculated to

win; while the other, with courage as undaunted, though eclipsed by greater and rarer qualities, stood too far removed from the weaknesses of ordinary men to appear in such an amiable light; and by the extent of his capacity and his habits of command, secured the respectful submission of others more than he won their love. Yet, while of Nelson it was justly said that no serious breach of discipline was ever overlooked by him; of Jervis it was as truly observed, that all good officers—all men employed under him, whether in civil or military service—spoke of him as they felt, with admiration of his genius, approaching to enthusiasm; although the followers of his illustrious friend adored their idol with yet more fervent devotion. In his political opinions, this great commander was liberal and free, ever perferring the humane and enlightened side; and though loyally attached to the constitution of his country, yet careless what offence he might give to existing rulers by the unrestrained openness of his sentiments upon public affairs. Accordingly, he was even less a favourite with George III. and his court, than his great master, whose party was always opposed to that narrow-minded and bigoted prince.

It is truly painful to fling in that shade, without which this comparative sketch would lose all likeness to its original. The conduct of Lord St. Vincent was always high and decorous; and although he had a singular aversion to cant of any kind, nor to any more than that of an overdone and pharisaical morality, he never lowered, in his own person, the standard of private any more than of public virtue; wisely holding all conspicuous men as trustees for the character of the people, and in some sort representatives of the people's virtues. Lord Nelson, in an unhappy moment, suffered himself to fall into the snares laid for his honour by regal craft, and baited with fascinating female charms. But for this, he might have defied all the malice of his enemies, whether at sea or on shore, in the navy or at the court; because nothing is more true than that great merit is safe from all enemies save one—safe and secure, so its possessor will only not join its foes. Unhappily, he formed this inauspicious junction, and the alliance was fatal to his fame. Seduced by the profligate arts of one woman, and the perilous fascinations of another, he lent himself to a proceeding deformed by the blackest colours of treachery and of murder. A temporary aberration of mind can explain though not excuse this dismal period of his history.

The sacred interests of truth and of virtue forbid us to leave the veil over these afflicting scenes undrawn. But, having once lifted it up, on seeing that it lays bare the failings of Nelson, we may be suffered to let it drop over a picture far too sad to dwell upon, even for a moment.

MR. HORNER—LORD KING—MR. RICARDO.

THE history of George III.'s long and eventful reign presents to us no one domestic event so important in its consequences, both immediate and remote, as the rash and hazardous tampering with the currency, first by Mr. Pitt, under the pressure of the pecuniary embarrassments which his wars had occasioned, and next by the Liverpool ministry and the Whigs, in their determination to restore the standard suddenly and without compromise.

In 1797 the Bank of England was found to labour under extreme difficulties, from the export of bullion, the state of trade generally, and the financial demands of a Government, which was borrowing millions yearly to fill the devouring gulf of war expenditure, and to subsidize half the continental powers. It was perceived that either the War or the Bank must stop, and the latter alternative was at once chosen. An Order in Council was issued to prohibit it from paying in specie; an Act was passed to sanction this order, and enable country banks to pay in Bank of England paper; and the slaves of the Government, through the press and in Parliament, contended for five long years that this stoppage had no tendency to depreciate Bank notes, and had no tendency to increase their issue! That the over-issue, and consequently the depreciation, was for some years extremely inconsiderable, is certain; but these talkers, reasoners they cannot be termed, denied even the tendency of the suspension to cause either over-issue or depreciation, and affirmed that both were wholly impossible.

In 1803, Lord King, caring little now for the argument of tendency, demonstrated, by the plainest evidence of facts, that the depreciation had actually taken place; indeed the market price of gold having risen above its current price, distinctly proved it; and the only wonder is, that Mr. Thornton and Mr. Horner should not, in discussing the subject the year before, have come to the same conclusion.

It was not in the nature of this depreciation to stop, while its cause continued to operate. Mr. Pitt and his supporters, of course, denied it. He who had refused to believe in the existence of the army assembled at Dijon in 1800, and charged with disaffection a respectable mercantile man for writing to his London correspondent that this force was about to cross the Alps, and who never would listen to any account of it until it had destroyed the power of Austria at Marengo, might well be expected to shut his eyes against all the facts from Change-alley, and all the arguments of Lord King, to

show that he had intruded into the country a debased currency, when he banished all gold from its circulation. But the transacters of traffic all over the world were as deaf to the charmer of the senate, as he was blind to the facts before his eyes; and the Bank-note soon fell to the price of 17*s.* and 18*s.* for a pound. Lord Grenville, to his great honour, was the first among the authors of the mischievous policy of 1797 to perceive its consequences, and through the rest of his life, he was the man who most deeply regretted it.

In 1811 this evil had gone on to such a length, that the market price of gold rose from the Mint price of 3*l.* 17*s.* $10\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* to as high as 5*l.* 8*s.*, and at one moment it even reached 5*l.* 11*s.*, amounting to 42 per cent. of rise, and corresponding to an equal depreciation; so that the pound-note was about this time sunk to about 14*s.* value in specie. Accordingly, a regular traffic was carried on in this article; guineas and silver were bought and sold at this premium, and Bank-notes were taken at this discount.

This was the time chosen by the House of Commons for voting, by a great majority, a resolution that the Bank-note was worth twenty shillings, or that a guinea in gold was worth a pound-note and a shilling, and, with admirable consistency, to pass a law making it a misdemeanor to give more or less! There was but one farther step for such a body to take, and that was to declare, that two and two are equal to six, and to imprison any one who reckoned differently.

In spite of this gross and revolting absurdity, without any parallel in the history of deliberative bodies, and only to be matched in the annals of pampered despots mad with the enjoyment of power, the depreciation continued; the gold was wholly excluded from circulation; all that the Mint coined was instantly exported; neither debtors nor creditors knew how to reckon, and no man could tell the value of his property. In truth, the havoc which the depreciation had made with all the dealings of men was incalculable. Those who had lent their money when the currency was at par, were compelled to receive the depreciated money in payment, and thus to lose 30 or 40 per cent. of their capital. Those who had let land or houses on a lease, must take so much less rent than they had stipulated to receive. Above all, those who had lent their money to the country were obliged to take two-thirds only of the interest for which they had bargained, and were liable to be paid off with two-thirds of the principal. Any considerable fluctuation in the money circulation ever produces habits of gambling and extravagance; and all the mercantile transactions of the community, as well as all its private concerns, assumed this complexion, to which the wicked and absurd policy of the Orders in Council, another consequence of the war, greatly contributed, by destroying the regular and respectable mercantile dealings of the country, and introducing a

clandestine, contraband system, with the avowed intention of defeating the enemy's decrees against our trade, but also in order to mitigate underhand the pressure of our own retaliating measures.

At length the attention of Parliament, chiefly through the press, was awakened to the state of our affairs. The labours of the Bullion Committee under Mr. Horner, aided by Mr. Thornton and Sir H. Parnell, had opened all men's eyes to the fact of the depreciation. It was in vain that the incredible resolution of the same year, and, shameful to relate, passed three months after the debate in which Mr. Canning's inimitable speech had demonstrated the whole propositions of the subject, was cited against the over-issue, and its inevitable consequences. The Government at length saw that something must be done to stop the depreciation of the Bank paper, and to restore the standard; and the only argument for delay was the necessity of continuing the war expenditure—one of the most urgent reasons, certainly, for instantly applying a remedy to the enormous evil.

At length the government of Lord Liverpool, under the influence of Mr. Peel, who was one of its most powerful supporters, though not then in office, undertook the settlement of the question; and a committee was appointed, which, after a full investigation of the subject, reported in favour of an unqualified resumption of cash payments. Mr. Ricardo, not yet a Member of Parliament, but who had contributed more than any one, except Lord King and Mr. Horner, to the establishment of the depreciation, by his able writings upon the question, had a great influence upon the decision of the Committee and the plan adopted by it for restoring the standard. Mr. Peel, being chairman of the Committee, brought in the Bill, which was warmly supported by the Whigs, they claiming a kind of peculiar property in the question, from the support which they had always given to Lord King and Mr. Horner.

The sudden return to specie had of course this inevitable consequence, that all debts contracted during the depreciation in the depreciated currency were now payable in good money at par, so that if any one had borrowed a thousand pounds during the last ten years, he had now to pay thirteen hundred. And so of all time bargains: tenants had their rents raised in the same proportion, and the country became liable to pay one hundred pounds for every seventy which it had borrowed. The effect produced upon all prices was equally considerable, but was not so pernicious to the country. The case of landowners was, on the whole, the hardest. They had laid out money in purchases, or in improvements, and had generally borrowed a large portion of the sums thus expended. All prices were now reduced, and they were liable to pay their creditors twenty shillings for every fourteen that they had borrowed. The result was, that a considerable body of these unfortunate men

were now left without enough to pay their creditors, and some of the class had even lost their whole income. It is fit to consider these things when so great a dissatisfaction is felt with their opposition to a repeal of the Corn Laws.

There are very many reflecting persons who now deeply lament the course which the Government and Opposition combined together to pursue in 1819. The argument, that prices were only affected in proportion to the difference between the market and the Mint prices of gold at the period of greatest depreciation, seemed unsatisfactory, because those prices have risen in a greater proportion than the difference during the depreciation, it seemed reasonable to expect that this difference would not be the measure of the fall which the resumption of cash payments might occasion. However, one thing was certain, that no regard was shown in the great and sudden, and somewhat violent, measure of 1819, to the case of all borrowers during the depreciation, including the state itself, and that it was anything rather than a proof of relief being extended, or evidence of justice being done to the borrowers between 1810 and 1820, that the lenders between 1790 and 1800, who had been paid off between 1810 and 1820, had been severe sufferers by the depreciation of the currency they were paid in. If the two bodies of borrowers and lenders had continued the same all along, the argument would have been unanswerable. In the actual case it was a gross absurdity; for it was assuming that one man might be fairly obliged to pay twenty shillings for every fourteen he had borrowed, because another man had been paid only fourteen shillings for every twenty he had lent.

Any account of George III.'s reign would be most imperfect which did not dwell upon this important part of it; and, in order to complete the view of those statesmen who directed the public affairs during the same period, it is necessary that the eminent individuals should be commemorated, who, having borne the principal share in the controversy respecting the depreciation, may be considered as the guides of the sounder policy which led to a restored currency, although the manner of effecting the restoration is liable to much and just observation.

Mr. Horner having entered public life without any advantage of rank or fortune, though of a respectable family, had, in a very short time, raised himself to a high place among the members of the Whig party (to which he was attached alike from sincere conviction, and from private friendships with its chiefs), by the effect of a most honourable and virtuous character in public life, a steady adherence to moderate opinions in politics, talents of a high order, and information at once accurate and extensive upon all subjects connected with state affairs. Not that his studies had been confined to these; for his education, chiefly at Edinburgh, had been most li-

beral, and had put him in possession of far more knowledge upon the subjects of general philosophy, than falls to the lot of most English statesmen. All the departments of moral science he had cultivated in an especial manner; and he was well grounded in the exacter sciences, although he had not pursued these with the same assiduity, or to any considerable extent. The profession of the law, which he followed, rather disciplined his mind than distracted it from the more attractive and elegant pursuits of literary leisure; and his taste, the guide and control of eloquence, was manly and chaste, erring on the safer side of fastidiousness. Accordingly, when he joined his party in Parliament, his oratory was of a kind which never failed to produce a great effect, and he only did not reach the highest place amongst debaters, because he was cut off prematurely, while steadily advancing upon the former successes of his career. For although in the House of Commons he had never given the reins to his imagination, and had rather confined himself to powerful argument and luminous statement than indulged in declamation, they who knew him, and had heard him in other debates, were aware of his powers as a declaimer, and expected the day which should see him shining also in the more ornamental parts of oratory.

The great question of the Currency had been thoroughly studied by him at an early period of life, when the writings of Mr. Henry Thornton and Lord King first opened men's eyes to the depreciation which Mr. Pitt's ill-starred policy had occasioned. With the former he had partaken of the doubts by which his work left the question overcast in 1802; the admirable and indeed decisive demonstration of the latter in the next year, entirely removed those doubts; and Mr. Horner, following up the able paper upon the subject, which he had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* at its first appearance, with a second upon Lord King's work, avowed his conversion, and joined most powerfully with those who asserted that the currency had been depreciated, and the metallic money displaced by the inconvertible Bank paper. In 1810, he moved for that famous Bullion Committee, whose labours left no doubt upon the matter in the minds of any rational person endowed with even a tolerable clearness of understanding; and the two speeches which he made, upon moving his resolutions the year after, may justly be regarded as finished models of eloquence applied to such subjects. The fame which they acquired for him was great, solid, lasting; and though they might be surpassed, they were certainly not eclipsed, by the wonderful resources of close argument, profound knowledge, and brilliant oratory, which Mr. Canning brought to bear upon the question, and of which no one more constantly than Mr. Horner acknowledged the transcendant merits.

When the subject of the Holy Alliance was brought forward by

Mr. Brougham, early in the session of 1816, Mr. Horner, who had greatly distinguished himself on all the questions connected with what the Ministers pleasantly called "the final settlement of Europe," during the absence of the former from Parliament, was now found honestly standing by his friend, and almost alone of the regular Whig party declaring his belief in the deep-laid conspiracy, which the hypocritical phrases and specious pretences of the Allies were spread out to cover. The part he took upon the debate to which the treaties gave rise, showed that there was no portion of the famous arrangements made at Vienna, to which he had not sedulously and successfully directed his attention. His speech on that occasion was admitted to be one of the best ever delivered in Parliament; and it was truly refreshing to hear questions of Foreign Policy, usually discussed with the superficial knowledge, the narrow and confused views to be expected in the productions of ephemeral pens, now treated with a depth of calm reflection, an enlarged perception of complicated relations, and a provident forethought of consequences, only exceeded by the spirit of freedom and justice which animated the whole discourse, and the luminous clearness of statement which made its drift plain to every hearer.

But this able, accomplished, and excellent person was now approaching the term assigned to his useful and honourable course by the mysterious dispensations under which the world is ruled. A complication of extraordinary maladies soon afterwards precluded all further exertion, and, first confining his attention to the care of his health, before a year was over from the date of his last *brilliant* display, brought him deeply and universally lamented to an untimely grave.*

> "Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
> Esse sinent. Nimium vobis Romana propago
> Visa potens, Superi, propria hæc si dona fuissent!"

When the new writ was moved, on his decease, for the borough of St. Mawes, which he represented under the liberal and enlightened patronage of the Buckingham family, Lord Morpeth† gave a striking sketch of his character. Mr. Canning, Sir S. Romilly, Mr. W. Elliott, and others, joined in the conversation, and Mr. H. Lascelles‡

* It deserves to be noted, as a marvellous instance of that truly learned conjecture by which the skill of Dr. Baillie was distinguished, that after many other physicians had severally given their opinions on the nature of Mr. Horner's hidden complaints, Dr. Baillie at once decided against all those theories; but, when he came to propose his own, avowed the extreme uncertainty in which so obscure and difficult a case had left him. However, he said that he guessed it was one or the other of two maladies so rare that he had only seen a case or two of the one, and the other never but in a Museum of morbid anatomy. When the body was opened by Vacca at Pisa, where he died, it was found that both those rare diseases existed.

† Now Lord Carlisle. ‡ Now Lord Harewood.

observed, with universal assent, that if the form of the proceeding could have admitted of a question being put upon Mr. Horner's merits, there would not have been heard one dissentient voice.

To Lord King was due the detection and the proof of the effects actually produced by Mr. Pitt's fatal measures, as has already been stated; and the excellent individual who rendered so great a service to his country, was distinguished for qualities of a very high order. To a strong natural understanding, which eminently excelled in clearness of perception and quickness of apprehension, he joined habits of study seldom found in the patrician order, but which, as well as his sound and enlightened principles, might well be expected in one who had the glory of descending from the second of English philosophers; for he was the personal representative of Locke,—his grandfather, the Lord Chancellor King, having been the nephew and ward of that illustrious person. Although he had far too little ambition, too little thirst for power or for literary fame, ever to exert his talents in anything like their full extent, he had passed his life in reading, with little other object than to occupy his time agreeably and to improve his mind. His information, therefore, was extensive and accurate; with most parts of historical, philosophical, and theological controversy, he was familiarly conversant; and he had gathered from all his studies and all his reflections, a firm belief in the title of the people to as large a portion of liberty and of power as they are capable of enjoying with advantage to themselves; a deeply rooted conviction of the sinfulness as well as the folly of intolerance, religious or civil; and an habitual veneration for the pursuit of truth and truth alone, in all inquiries whether practical or speculative. In following this worthy object he was as little to be daunted by perils in action as to be scared by consequences in argument. Difficulties had more influence over him by far than dangers; for though he was of an active turn of mind and applied himself to his favourite pursuits, whether of agriculture or study, with assiduity; yet, as he had no great stimulus from ambition or from vanity, he cared little to struggle with what cost trouble, as long as he could occupy himself as well in easier pursuits. The firmness with which he stood up on all occasions for his principles, the great doctrines of civil and religious liberty, would have done honour to the saints and martyrs of the seventeenth century. The offence which he gave by his warfare with ecclesiastical establishments never abated his hostility. Superficial men fancied that they saw in this course an indication of indifference to religion itself; whereas, one of his chief reasons for objecting to a state endowment, was its tendency to undermine religion, as he thought whether rightly or

erroneously, and its liability to be perverted into an engine against the liberties of the country.

With the solid qualities which have been described, he possessed others of a lighter kind, and to the more valuable acquirements of extensive study, he added several of the more trivial but more elegant accomplishments. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous: his taste in composition was pure; his style natural, simple, and clear. Nothing can be more admirably written than his celebrated Tract on the Currency; of which the philosophy, too, is as excellent as the argument and the inferences are practical. He had an excellent taste in gardening and in architecture, down to its most minute details; nor was there a more perfect draughtsman for the more ornamental parts of rooms, upon the pure models which in Italy he had studied, than the political economist who could unravel all the mysteries of currency and exchanges, the philosopher who could throw light on the darker passages of metaphysical science.

This distinguished person was equally delightful in private and respectable in public life. His gaiety was perpetual; natural, lively, playful, no one was more easily interested and amused; few brought more into the stock of entertainment. The difference of ranks was probably less known to him than to any one of the order to which he belonged. Pride of every kind was as alien to his nature as vanity. He seemed unconscious that the Chancellor King or the philosopher Locke had ever lived; and equally unconscious of his own existence. It should seem, indeed, that the fact of the Lord Chancellor's existence has been also obliterated from the recollection of his *surviving* family; for the name and title of King has been abolished, and some other one wholly unknown substituted in its stead. If this has been done from a noble desire to illustrate an obscure title by great actions, 'tis well. But in the mean time it may be remarked, that the Government ought to have corrected this apparent want of memory, and peremptorily refused an arrangement by which all traces are expunged from the Peerage of one who was an ornament to the order; one who was elevated to his rank for great public services, whose name was the property of his profession and his country.

The third of the persons who have been mentioned in connexion with the Currency question, was Mr. Ricardo; a person of good information and great ability, though not overtopping all others in learning, nor entitled to be reckoned a man of genius. The originality of some speculations on political economy, in which he engaged, was, indeed, undeniable; for, although the doctrine of rent now generally received had been broached some years before by Sir Edward West, afterwards Chief Judge at Bombay, he delivered it in

an obscure pamphlet, which being published anonymously attracted no attention, and was quite unknown both to Mr. Malthus and Mr. Ricardo at the time their controversy began. This furnishes an additional proof, however, of the truth so universally observed in all departments of science, that, discoveries being made gradually, and when many men's minds are bent in the same direction, the new light seldom breaks upon one eye alone, and a doubt may almost always be raised who is the person that really made the step.

The habits of this able and excellent person were those of business, and business of a contracted kind, as little likely to fit the mind for abstract and general inquiries as to point the notice towards them. His life had been passed on the Stock Exchange, like that of so many members of the Jewish persuasion to which his family originally belonged. But his leisure hours had been devoted to study, and no man was better acquainted with all the ordinary topics of political information. When the Bullion Question was forced upon the attention of Parliament and the country, by the manifest effects of inconvertible bank-paper having so long been issued by the Bank of England, and still more, perhaps, by the excessive issue of country bank-notes, contrary to all the speculative arguments of the Pitt school, founded upon a fallacious notion that their being made payable in Bank of England paper, imposed an effectual check upon their issue, whereas country people, preferring paper on which names well known to them were seen, never thought of making any such exchange, Mr. Ricardo took a part in the controversy that arose, and published one or two tracts on the depreciation. Lord King had first demonstrated this as early as 1804, the book of Mr. Thornton, and Mr. Horner's able and learned analysis of it in the "Edinburgh Review," having left this important question altogether undecided. But Mr. Ricardo's arguments and his facts, added to his great practical knowledge of all monetary questions, produced a powerful impression, and greatly aided the proceedings of the first Bullion Committee, that of 1810. As a literary performance, the pamphlet had a merit almost equal to that of its argument and its information. The style was simple, clear, and nervous; showing powers, both of reasoning and of explanation, which were of a high order, and disfigured by no deviation whatever from the rules of correct taste.

During the few succeeding years, in the enjoyment of high reputation among political economists, and taking a distinguished place among literary men, he continued his labours as an author, and, consolidating his views in one work, gave to the world his excellent treatise on his favourite science, which, with Mr. Malthus's Essay on the "Principle of Population," divides the claim to a second place, after the "Wealth of Nations," among the books which this country has produced upon the important science of Economics. Meanwhile

his controversial discussions with Mr. Malthus and others were conducted in a spirit of candour and genuine unaffected good-humour, joined to first-rate ability and argumentative skill, that makes them a model for all succeeding combatants in the fields of reasoning. The distinguished men who carried on this discussion in public, through the press, betrayed no heat or impatience of temper—no anxiety to take an unfair advantage—no wish to catch at trifling omissions or slips—nothing of heat or animosity whatever; they were manifestly impressed with one only desire and in pursuit of one object alone—desirous only that the truth should be discovered—the truth, the sole object of their search; and although there was involved in the contest the question of their own fame, it was conducted as calmly as a game at chess or the investigation of a problem in the mathematics.

The Bill which usually goes by Mr. Peel's name had been passed for restoring the currency a short time before Mr. Ricardo came into Parliament; but the Committee (commonly called the Second Bullion Committee), out of whose Report the measure arose, had fully adopted the principle and had clearly followed the plan laid down by Mr. Ricardo. When he took his place in the House of Commons, after the high reputation which had preceded him, he necessarily appeared to some disadvantage under the weight of the great expectations formed of him. But, as far as these were reasonable, however ample, they were fully answered. His speaking, his conduct, his manner, were all unexceptionable, and all suited to the man, his high station among philosophers, his known opinions on *political* affairs, his kindly nature, and his genuine modesty. There was something about him, chiefly a want of all affectation as well as pretension in everything he said or did, that won the respect of every party. His matter was ever of high value. Whether you agreed or differed with him, you were well pleased to have it brought out and made to bear upon the question, if indeed the pursuit of right and truth was your object. His views were often, indeed, abundantly theoretical, sometimes too refined for his audience, occasionally extravagant from his propensity to follow a right principle into all its consequences, without duly taking into account in practice the condition of things to which he was applying it, as if a mechanician were to construct an engine without taking into consideration the resistance of the air in which it was to work, or the strength and the weight and the friction of the parts of which it was to be made. When he propounded, as the best way of extricating us from our financial embarrassments, that the capital of the country should be taxed 700 or 800 millions, and the debt at once paid off, and defended this scheme upon the twofold ground, that what a debtor owes is always to be deducted from his property and regarded as belonging to his creditors,

and that the expense of managing the debt and raising the revenue to pay the interest would be a large saving to the nation, he assumed as true two undeniable facts, but he drew a practical inference not more startling at its first statement than inadmissible when closely examined upon the clearest grounds of both expediency and justice. It may even be doubted whether the only feasible portion of the plan, the diminution of interest from time to time effected by threats of repaying the principal, or rather redeeming the annuities (the only thing to which the public creditor is entitled), be not a step too far in this direction both as to justice and policy. In like manner he always greatly undervalued the amount of the depreciation in the currency upon prices generally, estimating it solely by the difference between the Mint price and the Market price of gold; and so confidently did he believe in this speculative estimate, that his practical plan for restoring the currency was grounded upon it. But while such were his errors, and those of a kind to excite very strong feelings in certain large and important classes in the House of Commons, he was uniformly and universally respected for the sterling qualities of his capacity and his character, which were acknowledged by all.

His speaking was of an admirable description; clear, simple, correct in diction, copious in argument, pregnant with information, but never thrown away. He reserved the share which he took in debate for questions to which his attention had been particularly directed, with which he was familiar, and to which he attached great importance. Hence, even his extreme opinions upon questions connected with the reform of the constitution in Church and State gave no offence; for he appeared not to court the opportunity of delivering them, but as if compelled by a sense of duty to declare his mind, careless or indisposed otherwise to make a speech. Few men have, accordingly, had more weight in Parliament; certainly none who, finding but a very small body of his fellow-members to agree with his leading opinions, might be said generally to speak against the sense of his audience, ever commanded a more patient or even favourable hearing; and, as this was effected without any of the more ordinary powers of oratory or of entertainment possessed by others, it might be regarded as the triumph of reason, intelligence, and integrity over untoward circumstances and alien natures. The regret felt for his loss was in proportion to the high estimation in which he had been held during the three years that he sat in Parliament; and the country, as well as its representatives, justly sorrowed over a great light extinguished prematurely, which had already proved so useful, and which might have been expected to render so much greater and longer service in illuminating the world.

NOTE.—It may seem an omission in a work professing to give the orators as well as the statesmen of the last age, that Curran should not appear among them,—the greatest orator after Grattan and Plunket that Ireland has produced, and in every respect worthy of being placed on a line with the great masters of speech. But there is really an insuperable difficulty in attempting a task which has been so inimitably performed already, and within only a few years. Mr. C. Phillips's sketch of his friend is certainly one of the most extraordinary pieces of biography ever produced. Nothing can be more lively and picturesque than its representation of the famous original. The reader of it can hardly be said not to have personally known Curran and Curran's contemporaries. It has been justly said of this admirable work that it is Boswell *minus* Bozzy. No library should be without such a piece; and instead of hopelessly attempting any addition to it, there will be more use in copying over one of the numerous characteristic descriptions in which it abounds.

"I caught the first glimpse of the little man through the vista of his garden. Thus he was on a third time—afterwards I saw him in a dress which you would imagine he had borrowed from his tipstaff; his hands in his sides; his under-lip protruded; his face almost parallel with the horizon—and the important step, and the eternal attitude only varied by the pause during which his eye glanced from his guest to his watch, and from his watch reproachfully to his dining-room;—it was an invariable peculiarity—one second after four o'clock, and he would not wait for the Viceroy. The moment he perceived me, he took me by the hand, said he would not have any one introduce me; and, with a manner which I often thought was *charmed*, at once banished every apprehension, and completely familiarised me at the Priory. I had often seen Curran—often heard him—often read him; but no man ever knew anything about him who did not see him at his own table, with the few whom he selected. He was a little convivial deity; he soared in every region, and was at home in all—he touched everything, and seemed as if he had created it; he mastered the human heart with the same ease that he did his violin. You wept, and you laughed, and you wondered; and the wonderful creature who made you do all at will, never let it appear that he was more than your equal, and was quite willing, if you chose, to become your auditor. It is said of Swift that his rule was to allow a minute's pause after he had concluded, and then, if no person took up the conversation, to recommence himself. Curran had no conversational rule whatever: he spoke from impulse, and he had the art so to draw you into a participation, that, though you felt an inferiority, it was quite a contented one. Indeed nothing could exceed the urbanity of his demeanour. At the time I spoke of he was turned of sixty, yet he was as playful as a child. The extremes of youth and age were met in him: he had the experience of the one, and the simplicity of the other."—(Recollections of Curran and some of his Contemporaries, p. 3.)

Let one specimen of Curran's powers be added, and it is one of the most certainly known to be unpremeditated of any in the history of the rhetorical art; for who could ever have supposed a judge capable of sneering at a barrister's poverty, by telling him he suspected "his law library was rather contracted?" Yet this was the brutal remark of Judge Robinson, the author of many stupid, slavish, and scurrilous political pamphlets, and by his demerits raised to the eminence which he thus disgraced.

"It is very true, my Lord, that I am poor, and the circumstance has certainly somewhat curtailed my library: my books are not numerous, but they are select, and I hope they have been perused with proper dispositions. I have prepared myself for this high profession rather by the study of a few good works, than by the composition of a great many bad ones. I am not ashamed of my poverty; but I should be ashamed of my wealth, could I have stooped to acquire it by servility and corruption. If I rise not to rank, I shall at least be honest; and should I ever

cease to be so, many an example shows me that an ill-gained elevation, by making me the more conspicuous, would only make me the more universally and the more notoriously contemptible!"

The historian of George III.'s reign, who should confine his attention to the Statesmen of England, would exhibit but a faint picture of the times, and very imperfectly represent even those who administered the affairs of our own country. The eminent men to whose hands the destinies of France were committed during the eventful period of the Revolution, exercised an almost direct influence over the fortunes of every neighbouring nation; and a just view of the course pursued by our statesmen cannot be obtained without considering the French rulers to whom they were opposed, or with whom they negotiated. The order of time, and indeed the relation of events, points first to the name of

NECKER.

Few men have ever risen from humble, even obscure beginnings, to a station of vast importance, both for wealth and power, for personal aggrandizement and influence over the fate of the world, with so little of genius as Necker; and it is a grateful refreshment to the mind of the historian, weary with contemplating successful vice or great resources expended in committing great crimes, to dwell upon one example of more ordinary merits recompensed by all the gifts of fortune, and stern virtue, unsustained by brilliant capacity, conferring upon its possessor supreme power and far-resounding fame.

The clerk in a Paris banking-house, though of a respectable and indeed ancient Genevan family, he became early in life, by the successful pursuit of commerce, one of the richest men in France. The student of letters for his amusement, and without anything like genius in the sciences or the *belles lettres*, he lived to be the centre of all literary society in the most refined capital of Europe, to which he was a stranger by his birth. The trader first, then the envoy of the smallest state in Europe—a state rather known among other powers as the butt of their gibes than the companion of their councils—he rose to be chief minister of the greatest among them; and the young adventurer from Geneva, by his errors, or by his patriotism, as men may variously view it, lived to be the proximate cause of that mighty event which shook all Europe to its centre, and exercises to this hour an influence universal and unparalleled over the destinies of the world.

Necker was sent from his father's house at Geneva to learn business in the banking-house of Vernet: he soon acquired the ascendant where he had been only clerk; and, becoming afterwards partner in the house of Thelluson, he at once, by his talents for business, established the splendid fortune of that great firm and became the architect of his own. Retiring at an early age from mercantile pursuits with an ample fortune, he was chosen resident for the republic of Geneva at the court of Versailles, and soon became universally esteemed in the circles of the aristocracy, as he had been in those of commerce, for his amiable manners and his strict integrity. His information was extensive, and it was accurate: he had especially studied finance, and was extremely knowing on all matters connected with it,—a subject of peculiar and universal interest at the time when he came into patrician society. His wealth we may well suppose added greatly to the charms of his society in a luxurious capital like Paris, and was not even without its effect on the courtly circles of Versailles. But his conversation and his manners were calculated to win their way independent of a brilliant fortune; the former—lively, cheerful, elegant, and instructive; the latter—simple, natural, and, if somewhat pedantic, yet honest and manly. Indeed, of that which the great vulgar are so wont to look down upon as pedantry, it may be observed, that its title to our respect is not trifling: for it necessarily implies intellectual qualifications in at least one department, and so much honesty and openness of character as will not consent, for fashion's sake, to wear a mask. It must be added that our French neighbours have always deemed pedantry and pedantic manners a much lighter offence in the code of social state than ourselves. In the gayest circles of Paris such a taunt goes but for little—nay, is often found rather a passport to notice, if not to respect; while the less frivolous English, as they deem themselves, turn from it with contempt. This difference, probably, arises from the greater zeal with which the Frenchman throws himself into any pursuit he embarks in, careless of his dignity, and fearless of the ridicule attendant upon those who go to extremes. He is, generally, therefore, prone to the very courses which are characteristic of the pedant, the man of a single idea, the enthusiast who, absorbed in a single pursuit, forgets that others sympathise little with him. He has, as it were, habitually and naturally the pedantic diathesis, and hence is either insensible to its effects on others, or easily becomes patient of them himself.

But Necker had consecrated his leisure to pursuits more important than shining in the society of either the mercantile or the aristocratic community. As early as 1773, his "Eloge de Colbert" carried away the prize of the Academy; and when the anxiety respecting the public sustenance was at its height, he distinguished himself still

more by his admirable essay on the corn laws and trade—"La Legislation et le Commerce des Grains." From this period his accession to the management of the French finances was regarded as certain; and in 1777, when their derangement pressed the Government most severely, on the eve of its embarking in the American war, he was clothed with the high office of Director-General.

Nothing could be more wise, nor anything more brilliant, than his operations. He established order where he found confusion to prevail; where darkness and mystery shrouded each branch of the administration, he let in the wholesome light of day; in every department the inflexible enemy of fraud made strict honesty the basis of all his operations, and rigorously exacted from others the same purity of which he furnished himself so bright an example. He began by refusing the whole salary and emoluments attached to his office. Short-sighted men joined with those whose interests were threatened by this course, in considering it as the fruit of a vain-glorious disposition. It was nothing of the kind: it was the wise and well-considered precaution of arming himself with the power to extirpate all abuses, and reduce all useless payments, and even to press hard upon the subsistence of individuals wherever the public good required the sacrifice. How else could he have suppressed six hundred places about Court, and in the Treasury, at one blow—the mighty achievement which signalized his accession to power? But he stopped not there. Some of the most oppressive remnants of the feudal system were abolished; the heaviest of the taxes (the Taille or property-tax) was limited and fixed; the most substantial reforms were introduced into the administration of hospitals and prisons; the foundation of yet more extensive improvements was laid in the establishment of Provincial Assemblies; and a general system of accounting extended to all the branches of the administration, so as to exact a full pecuniary responsibility from each. It must be added as a set-off against the charges which involve this honest minister in the blame of occasioning the revolution ten years later, that all the reforms of his first administration were prudently devised and framed upon a moderate scale, guided by well-considered views, and effected so gradually, that a second step never was taken until the safety and advantages of the first had been submitted to the only sure test, that of actual experience.

In some departments he had found resistance to his reforms, which his firmness, joined to his suavity of manner, and sustained by his unimpeachable integrity, enabled him to overcome. But Sartine, formerly chief of the police, who had been made minister of marine by the prime minister, Maurepas, reckoning on the support of his patron, refused to adopt the system of accounting which formed the corner-stone of Necker's whole plan; and Necker prevailed on

the King to supersede him, appointing in his room the Maréchal de Castries, a man of the highest honour and greatest zeal for the public service. Maurepas never forgave this proceeding. Availing himself of the clamour raised by Neckar's famous "Compte Rendu," and by his ordinance for calling together Provincial Assemblies, so odious to the ancient Parliaments, he brought about the vexatious treatment which led to the resignation of the able and honest minister, who in five years had changed a deficit of 35,000,000, of francs into a surplus of 10,000,000, without imposing one single new tax of any kind, and under all the burdensome war expenses which had been added to the former peace establishment. It must, however, be admitted that, although Maurepas worked for this purpose, Necker was not justified in resigning his office. The refusal of his demand to have the *entrée du conseil* (a seat in the cabinet) was hardly sufficient, if in all other particulars he had the firm support of the court; and, as nothing could exceed the distress into which his resignation plunged the royal family, so no effort was omitted for his restoration. It is generally believed that, had he been in office at the death of Maurepas, then fourscore years old and upwards, he must have succeeded to his place, and that he would certainly have prevented both the financial embarrassments which led to the Revolution, and the assemblage of the States, which, occasioned by the deficit, was its proximate cause.

The courts of Vienna, Naples, and St. Petersburg all besought him in vain to undertake the direction of their affairs as finance minister: but he preferred literary leisure; and his work on finance, published in 1784, had such success, that 80,000 copies of it were sold in a few days. Calonne, who succeeded him in France, soon threw all into the confusion from which he had extricated the revenue and expenditure of the country; and when Brienne became prime minister, after calling the States General together, and plunging the finances into still worse confusion than before, he was compelled again to send for Necker, who came to the assistance of the nation, but came far too late; and he said so himself on consenting again to take office—"Why have they not given me the Archbishop's (Brienne's) fifteen months? But now it is too late." He found the public securities unsaleable in the market, the country threatened with famine, the Parliament in banishment, the Bastille filled with deputies from the provinces, the whole country distracted with factious violence, and an immediate assembling of the States General distinctly promised. His name at once restored public credit—the feelings so strongly excited were calmed—the prison-doors flew open—the exile of the Parliament was ended—and the progress of famine arrested by the arrival of provisions. But he also found two questions standing ripe for decision; on both his firmness failed; and

either was sufficient to stay or to accelerate a revolution. The property-qualification of deputies to the States General he referred to the notables, whom he most injudiciously re-assembled, and who decided against it. The proportion of the Tiers Etat to the nobles and the clergy in the States General he finally decided should be double of either, or equal to both, and decided, after having at first framed his report against this double proportion, nay, having actually printed that document. A man so wanting in fixed opinions, or so infirm of purpose in pursuing his own views, was wholly unfit to guide the vessel of the state amidst the storms and currents of the revolutionary times. A letter which he wrote on the eve of the States' assembling has been frequently cited and even admired. "Je vois la grande vague s'avancer; est-ce pour m'engloutir?" Had he done all in his power to turn it back, or to protect the country from its fury—nay, had he done nothing to increase its volume and to accelerate its advance—this passage might have been deemed worthy of praise. But in him whose vacillation and incapacity had been such as we have just seen, a more silly observation, or one indicating more puerile vanity, can hardly be imagined. It even betrayed a selfish absorption in the contemplation of his own fate, wholly unworthy of the man and very unlike his general character. It looked as if his whole efforts had been bestowed upon endeavours to get himself out of his difficulties—as if his own escape or his own destruction alone occupied his thoughts at the moment of the crisis which his imbecile conduct had brought upon his country.

A conduct beginning with decision may often end in irresolution; but it is rare, indeed, that vacillation, marking the earlier scenes of a great action, should become steadied and give place to manly determination. In the great question of votes by chambers or by individuals, which immediately brought on, and, indeed, involved, the decisive measure of Abbé Sieyes (one of his three grand strokes of policy*), the union of the three in one chamber, Necker's irresolution continued as before; and he is understood to have obtained from the King, by next thing to compulsion, his letter of the 25th of June, sanctioning the union of the three orders. But within a fortnight after he was suddenly dismissed, and ordered to leave the kingdom. This was the signal of the Revolution, which broke out on the 14th of July, and Necker's triumphant recall immediately followed the taking of the Bastille.

* The other two were the National Guard and the Departmental Division. Certainly it is rarely that so many and such vast projects have been found to proceed from the same quarter; and this accounts for the respect in which Mr. Talleyrand, and other French statesmen, not generally lavish of their admiration, always held a person, to all who saw him, at least during the last twenty years of his life, apparently much overvalued.

Now began that series of feeble and inconsistent propositions, yet more feebly and inconsistently supported—of compliances one day with the people, another with the court—of stupefied inaction, alternating with pointless and ill-conducted activity, which composed his second administration, and justly lost him the favour of the people, without for a moment gaining the confidence of the King, or the nobles, or the church. After ten months spent in the outward semblance of power, but without any real authority or even influence whatever, the most degrading position that man can fill, he *quietly* resigned his office and quitted the country. Nor was contrast more marked ever exhibited in this world than between his former dismissal, which, throwing all France into convulsions, was the immediate occasion of the Revolution, and his voluntary retirement less than a year after, which passed as unheeded as the most insignificant event of the day,—between his return to power on the shoulders of the people in 1789, and his journey towards the Lake of Geneva in 1790, through the same country, where his life was in hourly danger from the violence of the same people, among whose execrations he retreated from France.

As regarded his own tastes and feelings this reverse did not greatly affect him; for though not void of ambition, and accessible enough to vanity, he had passed the latter portion of his life, particularly the last ten months, in a state which he described to be one of unceasing torture, always in a false position, constantly responsible for proceedings which he could not control, and apprehensive at each step of the most dreadful evils, which soon overtook the country in a measure yet more fatally abundant than his worst fears had foretold. He now, therefore, felt his retirement from public life, and from France, torn by fierce factions, and the theatre of violent convulsions, as a great relief, instead of a deprivation. In his quiet retirement at Coppet, he could enjoy the society of the early friends whom he loved, and devote himself to those literary pursuits which he had never abandoned. In the bosom of his accomplished family, too, he had resources of learned and social intercourse which are given to few indeed. Of his celebrated daughter, Madame de Staël, the literary fame thus early had spread through Europe; while his wife, beside performing all the duties of her station with exemplary fidelity, was also learned above the standard of ordinary women, and possessed considerable talents. But it was an amiable weakness of Necker to overrate the capacity of this worthy woman in a degree somewhat ridiculous. She was extremely formal, precise, and pedantic; she was also (if it be any addition to these qualities) exceedingly tiresome, and her society was all but dull, however well informed. But her admiring husband saw and heard all her performances, whether from the press or in conversation, as master-pieces; he cultivated her

with the observance of a humble votary; he watched her lips for the lessons of wisdom or the flashes of wit; and so little had the secret of her dulness, which all else knew, ever reached him, even to the extent of the most remote suspicion of that unfortunate and undeniable truth, that he would communicate to his guests before dinner, with the air of one who announces a pleasure at once exquisite and rare as a treat in store for his company—"Ah, entendez-vous, Messieurs; nous allons avoir Madame Necker à dîner aujourd'hui!" Her book upon Divorce is ably written, though heavily, and in a style forced, not natural. One chapter contains eloquent passages; and she espoused the side of the question most unpopular at the time, and looked down upon as that of narrow-minded and bigoted persons. There was, indeed, nothing more exemplary than the courage which this respectable person always showed in proclaiming and defending her opinions, religious and moral, in the society of Paris, where they were not only unpopular, but the object of general ridicule. Her principles were strongly rooted in her mind, and at all times firmly maintained in her conversation, as well as shown forth in her practice.*

This great merit was also that of her husband, who, on all occasions, in season and out of season, was ready to preach what he deemed the truth; careless whom it might offend, or to what attacks it might expose him. His strict notions of both public and private morality were little to the taste of the court when he first appeared at Versailles. As little was his republican simplicity relished in the Finance Minister of the Grand Monarque. Least of all were his principles of economical reform calculated to please any department in the state. But those notions, and habits, and principles were never for an instant lost sight of by this honest man, nor ever moderated to suit the prevailing taste, nor ever disguised under any more pleasing exterior than naturally suited his sentiments and appropriately clothed their character. If an honesty and a courage so rare both in statesmen, in courtiers, and in members of patrician society, led to the indulgence of a little self-gratulation, or, perhaps, self-admiration, in him who practised it, instead of smiling at him, as was the custom, for being somewhat vain of his virtue, we ought rather to confess not only that so great a merit is more than sufficient to redeem any such little weakness, but that the being conscious of the contrast which he presented to all others was the inevitable consequence of their defects rather than of his frailty.

This courageous honesty was the greatest distinction of Necker's public character; and this honesty never failed him, though, during

* This was the Mademoiselle Curchod whom Gibbon describes himself as having fallen in love with while the young lady resided at Lausanne—the daughter of a respectable Swiss Pastor.

his second administration, his firmness yielded to the numerous and almost inextricable difficulties by which he was surrounded. But, while we are left in unavoidable doubt whether any degree of resolution could have saved the state from the dismal scenes which followed his retirement, at least we can have no hesitation in pronouncing that, when he early saw himself performing the part of a sham minister, without any substantial power, he ought at once to have quitted the stage.

But this courageous honesty was by no means his only, though it was his chief, distinction, when compared with most other ministers. He was greatly their superior in point of information, both of general knowledge and of the science peculiarly belonging to politic men. His habits of business, too, were transferred from the counting-house to the bureau, while his Genevan education was not forgotten, hardly suspended, in the drawing-rooms of royalty or of fashion. His liberal opinions upon all subjects of *government*, as well as of economics, formed certainly a third peculiarity in a minister of "the times before the flood of 1789;" probably in a servant even of popular Monarchies. How few have served the limited and constitutional Sovereigns of England, at any period of our history, with such a steady regard to the interests of the people, so fixed and so practical a belief that their happiness is the end of all government, so rooted a determination to protect their rights wherever these could be asserted without danger from their licentiousness! That such a minister, who had played such a part in the earliest crisis of the Revolution, and all whose sentiments wore a republican hue, *should* be eminently distasteful to Napoleon, ever since he had abandoned all democratic courses, is little to be wondered at. On his march to Marengo, in 1800, he visited him at Coppet; and the First Consul—no longer that Buonaparte who had once crossed the same Alps to subdue the same Italy under the title of "Member of the National Institute *and* General-in-Chief"—now thought proper to designate his venerable host as a "college tutor, very heavy and very turgid" (régent de collége, bien lourd et bien boursouflé). It was the love of liberty, however, that he secretly hated, not the love of letters, which he thus caricatured; and if it be said that he had to reproach the popular minister's former life with much of the violence which broke out in France during his time, justice should have suggested that, as far as intentions were concerned, Necker uniformly took part against the people on the instant that he found their zeal for liberty degenerating into licentiousness.

Two faults, however, must be admitted to have alternately marked his scheme of conduct in this important particular, and they are perhaps the greatest and attended with the gravest consequences, both to a statesman's own fame and to the happiness of his country, of

any that he can commit. He never made sufficient allowance for the momentum which popular influence acquires, and the fire which popular feelings kindle, when once a great movement is begun; but always seemed to reckon upon having the same power to control excesses after as before the excitement, forgetting that, though his was the same hand which had set the machine in motion, he had no longer to resist and to direct the same force. It was an almost equal error in an opposite direction, that, when he had taken a certain part, and that violence was found to be the result, he got squeamish about trifles, and resisted at a time when it would have been wisdom to yield; wholly forgetting the line which he had chosen, the inevitable excesses to which it led, and the folly of objecting to what inevitably followed from his own election. Hence with all his integrity, which was untainted—his talents for affairs, which were undeniable—his sway over the public mind, which at one time was unbounded, perhaps unparalleled—he has left behind him the memory of a second rate statesman, whose good intentions are far more than counterbalanced by his bad judgment, and who, having ventured to pilot the vessel of state in a tempest without the firm hand of a steersman, can neither prevent the shipwreck of his charge nor of his reputation.

In private life Necker was one of the most amiable of men, beloved by his friends, and in his family adored. His society was sought by those for whom neither his ample fortune nor brilliant station could have any charms; and his literary merits were of a very respectable order. To genius he made no pretensions; and his writings, though clear, argumentative, well informed, are somewhat heavy. But a *jeu d'esprit*, entitled "Le Bonheur des Sots," has been much admired as a lively and ingenious production, the nature of which may easily be guessed from the title; and it is no small glory attending it, that Talleyrand's answer to it, "Le Bonheur des Gens d'Esprit," was a complete failure, the only one recorded either in his writings or his sayings of that greatest of modern wits. Of his other works, the "Dernières Vues de Politique et de Finance" is the best in every respect, though the defence of the celebrated "Compte Rendu," from the accidents of the time, made by far the greatest sensation. But the "Dernières Vues" is both a work of great ability and of extraordinary vigour for an author of threescore years and ten; and it has the writer's usual merit of telling plain truths at a time the least friendly to their reception: for it foretells and unmasks the designs of Buonaparte against the liberties of France long before the Consul's resolution to affect absolute power had been either disclosed by himself or discovered by the bulk of his countrymen.

MADAME DE STAEL.

NECKER is hardly better known in our day, as the Minister of Louis XVI., than as the father and friend of the most celebrated woman in modern times, perhaps in some particulars the most remarkable of her sex that has appeared in any age. If among statesmen her title to a place should be questioned, no one can deny that her writings and her conduct produced an important influence upon the politics of Europe during many years; and, as the potentates in whose hands the destinies of nations were placed, repeatedly acted towards her, some as benefiting by her support, others as injured by her opposition, nay, as she suffered persecution in consequence of her political influence exerted honestly for her principles and her party, it seems at once fair and natural to regard her title as confessed, and to number her among the political characters of the age.

It was, however, as an illustrious member of the republic of letters that she claimed the highest place, and as such that she has the clearest right to the respect of posterity. She was undeniably a woman of genius; and she had this peculiarity among authors of her sex, that, while many have signalized themselves in the lighter walks of literature, and some in the more rugged field of science; while works of fancy have come from some female pens, and mathematical speculations from others; while an Agnesi has filled the professor's chair as an analyist in a celebrated university, a Chastelet has commented on Newton, a Dacier on Homer, a Somerville (excelling them all) on Laplace,—Madame de Staël has written one of the finest romances that ever appeared, one combining entertainment with instruction; has discussed, with all the rigour of argument and all the powers of eloquence, some of the most difficult questions of politics and of morals; and has profoundly investigated the character, and weighed the merits, both of the various systems of philosophy, the different bodies of literature, and the diversified schemes of civil polity, which flourish or which fade in the several countries of Europe. Although it would not be correct to say that her varied works are without great faults, still less to affirm that she has left no room for other performances on the same subjects, yet it is certain, and universally admitted, that as yet they stand at the head of the productions which we possess on those several subjects. Her essay on Rousseau's writings; her "Thoughts on Suicide;" her account of Germany; her "Corinne," or Italy described under the attractive form of a romance, all testify to her extraordinary powers, because each is at this hour the best book in its several kind of which we are possessed. Nor

does it follow from this admission, that the first of these tracts may not have overrated the merits of Jean Jacques; that much superficial matter is not to be found in the Allemagne; or that Italy may not hereafter be more philosophically, it can hardly be more strikingly, painted by another hand. But it must ever be a just subject of admiration to think that, in such difficult and various kinds of composition, a woman should have attained so great excellence, and of astonishment to reflect that the essays on Rousseau and on Suicide were the productions of a girl, one who had hardly attained the age of womanhood.

It is impossible for him who would truly represent the likeness of this extraordinary person, to separate her moral from her intellectual character, so closely did they touch and so powerfully act on each other. Her warmth of feeling not only stimulated her industry, but it sharpened her perspicacity, whetted her attention, invigorated her reason, and inspired her fancy: because she felt with enthusiasm, she penetrated with sagacity; because her heart beat high with zeal, her imagination glowed with fervour; the genuine sentiments of a most kind and compassionate nature kindled the warmth of her pathetic eloquence; her inextinguishable hatred of all that is cruel, or oppressive, or false, or mean, overflowed in a torrent of indignation against the tyrant and the impostor. How entirely she was under the dominion of her feelings when excited was known to her friends who dreaded her impoverishment, because they saw that she was without the hardness which nature has bestowed on others as the means of self-defence. How readily she could forget all other things when her heart was touched, was singularly shown on one occasion when she acted a part in a dramatic performance, and, confounding her natural with her assumed character, bounded forward to the actual relief of a family whose distresses were only the theme of a fictitious representation.

The passions are ever eloquent: left to themselves, their natural expression becomes contagious, and carries away the spectator when the actor is manifestly, but vehemently, moved. All that can be wanting in this case is the correct taste which restrains extravagant emotions or unbecoming diction: for it requires but a moderate acquaintance with words and idioms to give vent to the feelings which agitate the soul; and the difference is wonderfully little between the effect produced by the greatest mastery over language in an artist of consummate power, and that which follows the mere ebullition of natural passion in the words of an untutored victim. But Madame de Staël was well read in the best authors; at the fountains of the purest French diction she had drank often and deep; her taste was improved by the converse of highly-gifted men; much practice in writing had made the use of her own language easy to her: the in-

tercourse of society had given her the faculty of extemporary speaking; and to the mastery over her own she added a far more familiar acquaintance with foreign tongues than almost any Frenchman ordinarily enjoys. No wonder that with her vehement feelings she became almost immediately one of the most eloquent writers and speakers of the age. Her works bear testimony to this proposition in part; but whoever had only read without hearing her would have formed an imperfect idea of her extraordinary powers.

It must, however, be added, that though the clear expression of her meaning, the flow of her harmonious periods, the absence of monotony, the occasional felicity of illustration, the generally correct statement of an opinion or an argument, the striking and picturesque description, all shine throughout her page, yet we seldom meet with any imagery of peculiar originality or beauty, scarcely ever with any passage of condensed resistless force, and in the diction we are always reminded of the unpassable gulf which separates all foreigners who write in French, even those who, like the Genevans, have no other mother-tongue, from the Scarrons, the Voltaires, the Mirabeaus, to whom the purest, most idiomatic, and most racy language was familiar, and in whose writings it had an irresistible charm. It is a singular circumstance that, as Rousseau, who, with all his natural eloquence, wrote in inferior French, has left one work unlike all the rest in this respect, so has Madame de Staël given us a piece, and of a like description, which immeasurably excels her other and more important writings in the beauty of its diction. The "Confessions of Rousseau" as far excels the "Nouvelle Heloise" in the excellence of its French, as it falls below that production in the dignity of its subject. But it shows a marvellous power of elevating the lowest, vilest, often the grossest objects of contemplation, by the exquisite diction in which their description is clothed, and it is written in a tongue racy and natural as the best portions of Voltaire. The "Dix Ans d'Exile" of Madame de Staël in like manner, though resembling the "Confessions" in no other particular, is yet far superior to her other works in the purity and genuine Gallicism of the composition. It is in the same way that, when Mirabeau, the father, laid aside the pedantries of his sect, and wrote letters on family affairs to his brother, the Bailli, his style became one of the very best and most interesting and most original, instead of nearly the dullest and most formal and least readable in which a Frenchman's thoughts were ever conveyed.

The assertion so frequently made, that Madame de Staël had no wit, is true and it is false. If made absolutely and so as to comprehend all wit, the choice of witty and pointed expressions, the striking combination of ideas, the unexpected illustration of one thing by reference to another—nothing can be more unfounded. Hardly a page of her

writings but refutes it at once. But it is quite as certain that it was rather in witty expressions than in witty ideas that she abounded; and it is undeniable that she had little or no sense of the ludicrous, whether in persons or in things—and was thus without any humour or relish of humour, as well as averse to, or incapable of bringing any powers of ridicule to bear upon an adverse argument. Whoever would deny her powers of ready illustration, or of happy repartee, happy both in force and in delicacy, must have known her only through very bad reporters, persons unfair towards her, or incapable of appreciating her.—Napoleon having, during the hundred days, sent some one to express the want he felt of her to aid in establishing the constitution, received for answer—"Il s'est bien passé de constitution et de moi pendant douze ans; et à présent même il ne nous aime guère plus l'une que l'autre."—A man of learning and talents, but of sensitive vanity, having made before her a somewhat intemperate sally—"Avouez donc, monseigneur (said she to a prelate who sat beside her), qu'il n'y a pas de chose si sotte que la vanité ne fasse faire aux gens d'esprit."

In a person so full of warm affections, so fond of the natural in character, and so romantic in many of her tastes, it was strange to observe so entire an absence of all love for natural scenery. She was a great lover of poetry; of acting she was passionately fond; in music she took the greatest delight, and even excelled in singing, though she cultivated it but little: but for natural scenery she had no taste; could travel through a romantic country without taking her eye off the page she was reading; and lived on the lake of Geneva and within view of the Alps, without ever casting a look at either rugged mountain or blue water. Thoroughly honest, however, and hating affectation in all its forms, she could never pretend to what she did not feel, though at the risk of having a defect in her taste exposed: so, when some one was expatiating with fervour on the pleasure which a tender heart like hers must take among green shades and romantic rivulets, "Ah (she exclaimed), il n'y a pour moi de ruisseau qui vaille celui de la Rue du Bac."

In truth she existed for discussion, for observation of men, for the exciting interest of all national affairs. Society was the element in which she lived and moved and had her being; and the society of Paris was almost alone deemed society in her time. It was here she shone; it was here her influence was felt: it was by her power in this sphere that she could further those principles of liberal but orderly and humane policy to which she was devotedly attached. Her political writings had greatly extended her influence over that important portion of the French nation; and her conversation was singularly calculated to consummate her power. Hereditary in her family, and as well by the mother's as the father's side, was the undaunted spirit

which led her to profess her opinions, whatever odium they might draw upon her from the people, whatever persecution from the established authorities of the state. When the scaffold was hourly wet with the blood of the royalists, and the Queen was brought to her trial among the rest, Madame de Staël had the courage to publish her defence of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. When the Consulate was formed, which plainly indicated the approaching supremacy of Napoleon, she openly erected the standard of opposition to the aspiring chief, and made her house the centre of the party which attacked him in the Tribunate under the conduct of her intimate friend, Benjamin Constant. Failing in all attempts to gain her over or to silence her, Napoleon soon had recourse to reprisals; and his assumption of arbitrary power was signalised by her banishment from Paris, the greatest punishment he could inflict upon her. In this hostility to the enemy of liberty and of peace she persevered during the remaining ten years of his reign, although the two millions of the debt owing to her from the government were in consequence never paid until the period of the sudden and unexpected restoration. It would not be easy to name the individual who contributed more towards the conservation of that hatred of Napoleon's dynasty, and that zeal for its subversion, which led to the restoration, at a time when so many even of the Bourbon party had in despair joined the party of their adversaries, and followed the apparently resistless fortune of Napoleon. It is not always that exiled kings are ungrateful on their restoration to the friends of their adversity; and Louis XVIII. repaid to the daughter of Necker the two millions which he had lent to the state during the disastrous period of his second administration.

That the character of this extraordinary woman had some weaknesses, and that her understanding had some defects, it would be foolish to deny. The former certainly, perhaps also the latter, had their origin in the great warmth of her affections. Her nature was essentially good, kind, loving; and, as her attachments were not slowly formed, so were they not indulged by halves. But, if she gave herself up heartily to their influence, they were not the less firm, steady, and enduring. No one was less fickle in her friendships, and no one was less disposed to quit a subject or a pursuit which had excited her interest, however suddenly that excitement had been produced. Full of enthusiasm, she was yet constant; prone to vehement feelings, she was without violence either of temper or disposition; ardent in her affections and determined in her enmities, her whole composition contained not a particle of spite, or gall, or revenge. All was noble and generous, to her very faults; nothing mean or paltry belonged to her understanding or her heart.

It is however to be observed that this ardent temperament, which was often found subversive of prudence in conduct, proved extremely

prejudicial to the success of her intellectual efforts. From hence proceeded a proneness to receive erroneous impressions; to reason from the feelings; to be satisfied with a sentiment, or even a phrase, as if it had been an argument; to hasten over the ground towards a conclusion, from finding it more agreeable to occupy any favourite position than win the way to it by legitimate steps. The Genevan character is marked by a disposition to theorise, rather perhaps to coin little theories, small bits of doctrine, petty systems which embrace the easy corners of some subject. That Madame de Staël was wholly exempt from this besetting sin of her country it would be incorrect to affirm; but she redeemed it by the greater extent of her views in general, and by the hardihood of her speculations upon the most interesting questions; and her writings, both in subject and in style, had little indeed of that precision, self-satisfaction, microcosmic feeling, which may be traced in so large a proportion of the works that come from the banks of Leman Lake. The tone of the sentiments was also abundantly more liberal and less ascetic than to satisfy the code of the city of Calvin. Having mentioned her connexion with the great little republic by family, we should add that almost all her patriotic feelings were domiciled in France. Whoever witnessed her chagrin, occasionally approaching to despair, in the spring of 1814, when the consummation so long devoutly prayed for by her and her party had arrived, and, Napoleon being overthrown, the Allies entered Paris, must recollect how uncontrollably the Frenchwoman burst forth and triumphed over the politician and the cosmopolite. When Lord Dudley, half in jest, half seriously, expressed his hope that the Cossacks would reach Paris and nail a horseshoe on the gates of the Tuileries, her alarm and her indignation knew no bounds, and she could only exclaim, "Quoi donc, cette belle France!" almost suffocated by her feelings. The moderation of the Allies mitigated the acuteness of these during the remaining period of the occupation; but the subject of the capture was one to which she ever referred with a bitterness of spirit well calculated to read a useful and a solemn lesson. It is true she endeavoured to see in that great event only a new cause of hating Napoleon, to whose tyranny and ambition she ascribed the fall of France; but it is also much more than probable that, had she ever again been called to choose between the worst domestic faction, even the worst domestic thraldom, and its subjugation effected in that of her country, she would have said, "No more foreign armies;" and it is very certain that, if the same option had been presented to her mind before France had ever been overrun, and she had foreseen all she felt on the capture of Paris, she would have rejected this as the worst of all consummations, and withheld all aid to its accomplishment. The inglorious

end of Moreau, whose fall many might pity, but whose memory no one respects, adds a striking enforcement to the same patriotic lesson.

The public and the personal character of individuals, always nearly allied, are in women inseparably connected; so that in describing the one, both must have been pourtrayed. But one peculiarity remains to be added, and it is entitled to distinguished praise. Those persons who are much more learned than their class or order, the self-taught, the ὀψιμαθεῖς,* and chiefly women well instructed, are somewhat like persons who have risen unexpectedly and quickly to great wealth, letter-proud as these are purse-proud; apt to look down upon others whose resources are more slender, very apt to fancy both that their own means are boundless, and that none else possess any at all. Accordingly, beside the love of displaying their stores, it is commonly observed of such scholars that they both believe themselves to know everything, and suppose others to know nothing. But the illustrious woman of whom we are speaking was very far above such a weakness. None less than she made a parade of her acquirements; none more deferred to others, or more eagerly availed herself of all opportunities to increase her information. Indeed, in society, though naturally fond of shining, she threw herself far too heartily into the conflict to let her think of exhibiting her knowledge; and, if she delighted in the exercise of her eloquence, (as who that possessed it would not?), she never oppressed her hearers with talk for the mere display of reading, nor ever showed the least indifference to the merits of kindred or superior spirits.

The religious feelings of Madame de Staël were always strong, and in the latter part of her life they gained an extraordinary ascendant over her. The originality of her genius made her occasionally indulge in peculiar views on this as on all other subjects. But, as her belief in revelation was sincere, her habits were devout without superstition, and her faith was strong without the least tincture of bigotry or intolerance. She successfully inculcated the same principles in her children; and her daughter both illustrated the Christian Gospel by her writings, and exemplified its beauties in her life.

The warmth of her affections has been recorded: in her family, it is hardly necessary to add, these found the greatest scope and were in the most constant play. But the predominant feeling of her soul was filial love. Her father had ever been her most confidential and attached friend, from whom she had no thought or feeling of her heart concealed. Devotion to him through life, and the most religious and tender veneration for his memory when she lost him, seemed to occupy her whole mind. By her own children she was

* Persons late-taught.

cherished with the same ardent affection become hereditary; they, and in an especial manner the Duchesse de Broglie, were well worthy of the love she ever bore them; and if, to celebrate the capacity of women, as well as to prove how gracefully the rarest gifts of the understanding may be combined with the kindliest dispositions of the heart, the moralist will naturally point towards the illustrious mother, he will also name the admirable daughter, if he would present to the love and respect of mankind the purest example of every female virtue, and of all the accomplishments that can adorn the softer sex.

MIRABEAU FAMILY.

From dwelling upon one of the most delightful sights which the history of distinguished characters presents to the view, a family group of celebrated persons, whose virtues even exceeded their genius, and whose lives were spent in more harmony and more tender affection than are often the inmates of the cottage, we are now to turn our eyes upon a picture as different as can well be conceived, and only in the talents and celebrity of its subjects bearing any resemblance to the former. But the contemplation is full of interest, and by no means devoid of instruction.

The great celebrity of Mirabeau, the brilliant part which he performed in the beginning of the French Revolution, and the influence which he exerted over the early course of that memorable event, have given an interest to his private history, which belongs to that of hardly any other individual who never mounted a throne. Accidental circumstances combined with these considerations at once to excite and to gratify the curiosity of the world respecting him. The domestic quarrels of which he was, if not the cause, certainly the occasion, and the disclosures to which the temper and the indiscretion of the parties led, had made the name and the fortunes of this remarkable person familiar to all Europe, as a son, a husband, and a lover, long before he was known upon the great theatre of state affairs, or even in the republic of letters. That he has been more admired for his genius than he deserved is a probable, although it can by no means be set down as a clear, proposition. That his moral character has been blackened by prejudice and by party, while it has been misunderstood through ignorance of his circumstances and situation, seems to be a matter of no doubt at all. There is, perhaps, no second instance of an individual whose faults have been committed under such a pressure of ill-treatment to besiege and force his

virtue, rather than of temptation to seduce and betray it. Still less does history present any parallel to the injustice which has been done him by the world, even by those who had no prepossession against him—by the public and by individuals—an injustice which has consisted in uniformly listening to all that his enemies, chiefly of his own forming, said against him—never to any of his own statements—nor even to any of the proofs that existed against those enemies. There is this peculiar to the family quarrels of the Mirabeaus, that in all other such controversies it has become a kind of maxim with the world to punish the parties, if not for their private dissensions, at least for their public disclosures, by believing that all of them were more or less to blame; by declining to be very nice in apportioning their several shares of the censure; and by generally considering those shares as nearly equal. In the instance of Mirabeau alone this rule has been excluded; and, the whole blame being cast upon him, his father and his family have escaped all visitation. But the publication, in 1834 and the subsequent year, of his *Memoirs*, with the correspondence of the family, has occasioned a much more equal distribution of censure, and has introduced us to an acquaintance which we never before could have with two others of the family,—the father, till then only known by his obscure writings on political economy, and the uncle, never known at all.

The celebrated Marquess de Mirabeau, father of the Count, and head of that noble family, was one of the founders of the sect of Economists in France,—indeed, after Quesnai, its chief patriarch. He was also well known as the author of several important works upon its doctrines, and distinguished for his practical attention to economics as a considerable landowner and a patrician of a most ancient house. But they who had known, or fancied they knew, this distinguished individual the best, find themselves, upon opening the volumes lately published, in the presence of a personage entirely strange to them, and of whose nature, habits, and character they had previously no kind of knowledge. Nothing in truth can be more entirely unlike than the philosopher and the man, the liberal enlightened *Economist* and the haughty aristocratic noble; the friend of Quesnai and the father of Mirabeau; the *Ami des Hommes** and the Père de Famille. But all this is not without example; indeed, such discrepancies between men's public and their domestic characters are far from rare. The difference here is carried unfortunately farther. Justice,—a rigorous love of the strictest justice,—is the characteristic of the Marquess and of his sect; but his treatment of his son offers one perpetual scene of all justice grossly outraged. To observe moderation,—to regard the useful end of all things,—to

* The title of the Marquess's most famous work.

act as if they were born not for themselves but for mankind,—was the very motto of the Economists :—

> Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere,
> Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
> Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

But the Marquess's predominant passion was family pride; moderation neither in this nor in any other feeling was ever for an instant the inmate of his mind, nor the regulator of his thoughts; and he always spoke, and wrote, and acted in private life as one who never for an instant of his days doubted that the world was made for the *order* (not the *sect*) he belonged to, and that his first and highest duty was to keep the Mirabeau family at the head of that favoured class.

To follow the dictates of nature, to devote their lives to the cause of truth, was the residue of the Economist's motto. But the most cruel prepossession against his first-born,—the most refined cruelty of treatment which his ingenuity could devise for that child,—the greatest finesse of every kind employed to ensnare him;—even the expedient of leaving him in wretched circumstances, and restoring him to liberty, in order that he might either terminate his existence in despair, or forfeit his life to the law—accompanied with an adulterous connexion which made his own wife leave his house—such are the traits of private character which these volumes represent as belonging to the lover of nature and truth, and these traits are for the most part represented under the infallible testimony of his own hand.

But under that hand we have proofs of a difference still more marvellous, and of which there is certainly no other example. The author of the most dull, heavy, uninteresting books, in the most tiresome, insipid, almost unbearable style, is the writer of about the very best, the most lively, the most entertaining letters, in a style which, for originality, raciness, force, felicity of diction, has scarcely a rival!

The Marquess was born in 1715, the eldest surviving son of a family esteemed ancient and noble even in Provence, and established there for above five centuries. It was the family of Riqueti, or Arrighetti, originally from the neighbouring territory of Italy, and which has produced several eminent men; although it is said that the relationship of the most famous of them all, Riqueti the engineer and author of the Languedoc canal, was denied by the preposterous and barbarous pride of the clan. He was, like all the elder branches of noble French houses, placed betimes in the army: made a Chevalier de Malte at three years of age; an ensign at fourteen; soon after a captain; served with great credit and even distinction at the siege of Kehl and Phillipsbourg, and at the battles of

Dettingen and Clusen; and in 1743, at the age of twenty-eight, received the cross of St. Louis. The death of his father having some years before placed him in a state of independence, he now quitted the army; and, leaving also the order of Malta, he married the Marquise de Saulvebeuf, a widow and a maid; for according to the admirable arrangements of the old *régime* in France (that perfection of patrician wisdom and felicity), she had been married exactly at twelve years old to a gentleman advanced in years, and who, as frequently happened, accomplished his burial before he consummated his marriage. This second marriage did not prove happy in the end, nor do we see who but the philosophical husband is to blame for it. The lady was young, rich, and noble, but not handsome: her virtue was beyond suspicion, however; and, this not satisfying the Marquess, after she had lived fifteen years in peace and comfort with him and borne him eleven children, he quarrelled with her, took into his house Madame de Pailly, a fascinating young Swiss *lady*; lived with her openly; turned his wife out of doors; and was for fifteen years engaged in a course of litigation with her, and of cruel as well as treacherous proceedings against her, which made both wretched, both the subject of universal talk, and both the objects of general blame, without profiting any human being, except Madame de Pailly, and his cunning old valet, and the lawyers, and the spiteful gossips of the Paris drawing-rooms.

His chief and noble purpose in quitting the profession of arms was to lead a life of literary retirement, and to improve the condition of his rural dependents. Towards these his conduct was always perfect; it was sensible, just, kind; he was their real father, and they were the only children who uniformly found in him the virtues of the parental character. He first went to his château in Provence; but neither the distance from Paris, nor the state of the country there, suited his spirit or agreed with his taste. The reason he assigns for quitting the residence of his ancestors is abundantly characteristic of the aristocratic temperament which was his master through life, and the source of almost all his own errors and his family's misfortunes.

"On n'y pratiquait plus ce culte de respect attaché à des races antiques, dont la toute puissance est maintenant méconnue; on ne s'y prosternait plus devant les vieilles races et les gros dos de Malte; enfin la province, totalement conquise par *l'écritoire*, contenait plus d'animaux armés de plumes que vingt-deux royaumes bien policés n'en devraient renfermer, espèce la plus venimeuse et la plus épidémique pour un seigneur."

Accordingly, he purchased the estate of Bignon, fifteen miles from Sens and Nemours, and, soon after, an hotel in Paris. Then and there began the career of philosophy which he ran for half a century, and which only terminated with his life, about the beginning of the

French Revolution, when he left the world with a reputation for virtue greatly exaggerated, and for talents much below his due, at the age of seventy-five. No less than twenty-two works claim him for their author; but those which alone are now well known are "L'Ami des Hommes," "Théorie de l'Impôt," "Philosophie Rurale," and "Education Civile d'un Prince." Beside these voluminous writings, he contributed a vast number of papers to the "Journal d'Agriculture" and the "Ephémérides du Citoyen," the former of which reached the bulk of thirty, and the latter of forty volumes.

It may easily be imagined how joyfully such a brother was received into the sect of the Economists, whose zealous supporter he proved, and indeed whose second chief he was acknowledged to be. To their spirit of party, or the more intense attachment which sectaries feel for each other, it is perhaps mainly owing that his faults were so lightly passed over, and his domestic prejudices shared so largely by the French public. As for any active virtues that he displayed, they are confined to his industrious propagation of the *Economical* doctrines, and his humane enlightened government of his peasantry. He mingled, as was usual among our neighbours, even for philosophical patricians, in the society of Paris; and, as was quite of course in the happy times of legitimate government, he was sent to prison by a *lettre de cachet*, the offence being his work on taxation, which gave umbrage to the *Fermiers Généraux*, and cost him a short imprisonment in Vincennes fortress, and some weeks' banishment to his estate. The rest of his actions, which brought his name before the public, were his scandalous proceedings against the members of his family, and chiefly his wife and his eldest son.

The next personage in the family group is the Bailli de Mirabeau, the Marquess's brother. A more gallant, honest, amiable, and indeed sensible man, it would be hard to find in any circle or in any situation of life. Partaking of his brother's family pride, but never his follower in suffering it to extinguish the better feelings of his nature; just to a degree of romantic scruple; simple, honest, and open as a child; brave to a fault, so as even to signalise himself in a country, an age, and a profession, where the highest valour was epidemical; kindly in his dispositions, so as to devote his whole time and resources to making others happy; domestic and affectionate in his habits, so as to live for his brother and his nephew, when his vow precluded his having progeny of his own; religious without intolerance; strictly chaste and pure himself, without austerity towards others; and withal a man of the most masculine understanding, the quickest and even liveliest wit, the best literary taste—the Bailli de Mirabeau presents to our admiration and esteem one of the most interesting characters

that ever showed the very rare union of whatever is most attractive with whatever is most respectable. His love and respect for his brother, both for his eminent qualities, and as head of his house, is one of the strongest features in his character; but it is tempered with every feeling of tenderness towards those against whom the Marquess was most bitterly prejudiced; and it leads to constant efforts towards disowning his brother's animosities. His proud independent spirit is shown in the treatment which all who would have encroached upon it were sure to meet at his hands, however exalted their rank or predominant their influence, and without the least thought of any remote effect which his high carriage might produce upon his most important interests. Of this we have an interesting trait in the answer he made to Madame de Pompadour, with whom a good understanding was held essential by the minister Nivernois, before he could place him at the head of the marine department, as he wished to do. He had succeeded to admiration in captivating the royal mistress at the first interview, by exhibiting the graces both of his person and his wit, when she chose to remark what a pity it was that the Mirabeaus were so wrong-headed (*que tous ces Mirabeau soient si mauvaises têtes*). "Madame," (was the answer at once so honourable to his spirit, so creditable to his wit, and so fatal to his views) "Madame, il est vrai que c'est le titre de légitimité dans cette maison. Mais les bonnes et froides têtes ont fait tant de sottises, et perdu tant d'états, qu'il ne serait peut-être pas fort imprudent d'essayer des mauvaises. Assurément, du moins, elles ne feraient pas pis."

This excellent man was born in 1717, being about two years younger than his brother. In three years he was received into the Order of Malta, in which he lived and died; served from the age of twelve in the navy; was wounded and taken prisoner by the English; was made *Capitaine de vaisseau* at thirty-four, and governor of Guadaloupe the year after; retired to Europe for his health in 1755; and next year was seriously wounded at the siege of Port Mahon. During the rest of the war he had staff appointments in the marine department, and was in many dangerous battles and bombardments. He then was recompensed for his wounds and his thirty years' service by the complete neglect of a profligate and ungrateful court, which drove him into retirement; and he went to Malta, where he remained devoted to the affairs of the Order till he obtained a *Commanderie* in 1766, which carried him into France, and he there devoted the rest of his honourable life to literary ease.

Of Madame du Saillant, married into the elder branch of the amiable and revered family of Lasteyrie,* but little is known. She was

* Count Charles Lasteyrie is a younger brother of this house: he is known, respected, and beloved by all the friends of humanity.

the eldest and most gifted of the Marquess's daughters. Her sister, Madame de Cabris, though less clever and accomplished, would in any other family have passed for a wonder; but her life and habits were profligate, and the Mirabeau annals often note the exploits of a certain Briançon, her lover, a person of coarse manners, vulgar cunning, and dishonourable habits, whom nevertheless the Marquess thought fit to employ, partly as a spy and partly as a thief-catcher, to entrap or to seize his son. Nor is there any of those annals more painful, we might almost say disgusting, than that in which this low creature plays his part. Of Madame de Pailly much less appears directly, though her mischief-making hand is perpetually seen in all the history of the family; but the exquisite delicacy of the Bailli, and his prodigious respect and tenderness for his brother, made him shun all mention of her, and all allusion to her, except on one occasion, when he perceived her influence hard at work to produce a new quarrel between the father and the son, as soon as they had been restored to each other's society after a separation of ten years, and immediately after they had seized the opportunity of her absence from the château to become somewhat cordial together. Then it is that the good Bailli indites some letters full of sense, and no less honourable to his heart than to his head.

"Trop de gens se mêlent de tes affaires; tu me comprendras si tu veux; que tout ce qui te paraît obscur soit éclairci par toi-même, et point d'yeux étrangers, surtout des yeux féminins; plus ces yeux-là ont d'esprit et sont aimables, plus il faut s'en méfier, comme de ceux d'une belle Circé, derrière laquelle l'esprit de domination et de jalousie s'établit et s'insinue, de manière que les plus grands hommes en sont les dupes. Tu me dis, pour t'obstiner à m'envoyer ton fils et à me le laisser, le supposant rejoint à *la Cigale ayant chanté tout l'été*, que près de toi *sainte Jalouserie*, comme disait notre mère, se logerait entre les deux belles-sœurs, si celle d'Aix était chez toi; tu cites pour cela le passé. Tu te méprends à ce qui fut dit alors, et tu adaptes les paroles à l'objet qu'elles n'avaient pas, et point à celui qu'il était tout simple qu'elles eussent; car quelqu'un ne voulait pas qu'il y eût de coiffes dans la maison; mon chapeau même y déplaisait. Les femmes ne savent qu'intriguer, surtout les femmes d'esprit, sorte d'animal le plus dangereux de tous; celle en qui tu as une trop forte confiance est comme les autres; veut être la maîtresse: tout ce qui peut faire obstacle à cet empire, ou le partager, lui est désagréable, et en est haï cordialement. Règle générale et sans exception, toute femme, dans sa position, veut gouverner absolument, et elle comme les autres; je ne saurais me rappeler mille petits traits, même vis-à-vis de moi, qui, comme tu crois bien, ne m'en souciais guère; mais ce qui à moi, homme tout-à-fait libre et indépendant, ne me faisait rien, choque beaucoup les enfants; elle n'a jamais aimé aucun des tiens; bien est-il vrai que, sauf Saillanette, tout le reste ne paraissait pas très aimable; mais Caroline elle-même, notre douce et paisible Caroline, la femme la plus émolliente qui fut jamais, Caroline, qui n'a des yeux que pour son père, son mari, et ses enfants, et qui t'est si fort attachée, tu te tromperais fort si tu croyais que l'autre l'aimât: compte que, sans me mêler trop dans les choses, je vois à peu près tout, et je laisse aller, parce que je sais qu'on ne peut pas empêcher la rivière de couler."

"J'ai toujours vu, ou à peu près, les défauts des gens que j'aime. Je ne vois même bien que ceux-là; mais, faute d'archanges, il faut aimer des créatures im-

parfaites. Il ne faut pas même avoir vécu la moitié de mon âge, pour s'être persuadé de cela, sans quoi l'on se prendrait bien en aversion soi-même. Tu as grande raison de dire que les mouches incommodent plus que les éléphants; et, quand nous voulons voir une mouche par le venin, nous en faisons un éléphant de notre faciende. Je t'assure, par exemple, que la personne dont nous parlions, et sur qui tu décoches des sarcasmes tranchants et affilés par la queue, comme disait Montagne, m'a dit, plus de cinq cents fois peut-être, dans la longue suite de mes secousses, où il s'est trouvé bien des mécomptes et des faussaires; *bien d'honnêtes gens s'intéressent véritablement à vous; le public même s'indignerait de vos malheurs, si vous les portiez vous-même; mais vous n'avez vraiment que deux cœurs à vous : le bon Bailli et moi.*"

The Bailli's answer is also admirable:—

"*Le bon Bailli! le bon Bailli!* eh! par saint Policarpe, monsieur le marquis et mon très cher frère aîné, avec qui diable veux-tu que mon excellence rabâche, si ce n'est avec toi? *Le bon Bailli!* La personne qui a dit ce mot a fait acte de fausseté; *le bon Bailli* le sait, et le voit depuis longtemps sans le dire; il s'est bien dès 1750, aperçu que cette personne ne l'aimait pas, et tu l'aurais bien vu, *si elle* avait cru possible de te détacher de moi; depuis, j'ai cent fois vu qu'on a *voué* aux deux frères la haine la plus implacable; j'en ai bien ma part; Saillanette et Du Saillant aussi. Va, crois-moi, une étrangère qui s'introduit dans une maison y fait naître la discorde et fait mettre en mouvement toutes les passions qui suivent la discorde. Du reste, n'en parlons plus."

But let us now come to the most important figure by far in this group. Honoré Gabriel Mirabeau was endowed by nature with a quick and vigorous understanding, a lively imagination, passions more vehement than are almost ever seen in union with such intellectual powers, and a disposition naturally kindly and humane. His temperament led to the early unfolding both of his bodily and mental faculties; and there are few instances on record of children forming such manly ideas as he seems to have imbibed, even during his infancy. The peculiar circumstances in which he was, from his boyhood upwards, placed by the singular opinions, prejudices, and temper of his father, exercised a most powerful influence upon his whole conduct, and must have deeply affected his character in every material respect. Yet we may appreciate his merits and his faults, even through the artificial covering which was thus thrown over his nature; and, although impetuosity of feelings, and a proportionate disregard of the obstacles which he ought to have respected instead of overleaping, forms a predominant feature of his mind and his habits, we cannot fairly charge him with any of those faults which go mainly to form the vicious disposition. Forced first into estrangement from the society of his family, and afterwards into contempt of the parental authority, it must be admitted that originally he had strong filial affections, and no desire at all to set at defiance a control which he held peculiarly sacred; nor is it to be forgotten

that, when his two parents quarrelled, he resisted all attempts of the one to make him side against the other,—even when the restoration of his own liberty might have been the reward of such an offensive alliance against their common oppressor. Nay, the veneration for his father, which he had early imbibed, never was extinguished by any persecution; for we find him to the last feeling an intellectual superiority, which certainly did not exist, and always refraining from retaliating the charges brought against himself for his indecorous life, by any allusion to the worse life of the Marquess.* The parsimonious treatment to which his comfort and respectability in the world was all his life sacrificed, and which his father chose to reconcile with a family pride almost without a parallel, never made the son forget who and what he was, by descending to any act of meanness or dishonour; and, while pressed by want of the common necessaries of life, and tortured by the far more unbearable sight of those he most loved suffering the same privations, his exertions to relieve himself were always confined to the works of honest, though obscure, industry; nor has any one of his innumerable enemies, domestic, political, or personal, ever charged him with ever using, for the purpose of solicitation, that pen which was his only resource against want. The shifts and contrivances to which needy men, with strong passions, and in high stations, so often resort, and which would seem to justify in their case the uncharitable saying, that integrity and poverty are as hard to reconcile as it is for an empty sack to stand upright,—have never been imputed to Mirabeau, at a time when his whole soul was engrossed by an overpowering passion, or his senses bewitched by a life of pleasure, or his resources brought to an ebb little above those of the menial or the peasant. It would have been well if the influence of disorderly passions had not plunged him into other excesses no less blamable, though not, perhaps, at all dishonest or mercenary. It is not the connexion he formed with Madame le Monnier to which we refer, because for that, in its commencement, there were many excuses. A girl of eighteen married to a man of seventy-five, and only nominally married to this keeper, alternately confiding and jealous—now tempting her by indulgence and carelessness—now watching and restraining with tormenting and suspicious rigour—first awakened in Mirabeau's bosom the most irresistible of the passions, and all the more dangerous for so often assuming the garb, and even uniting itself with the reality, of virtuous propensities. The elopement which followed, and was caused by a dislike on both their parts to play the hypocrite and live with him whom they were deceiving, proved altogether alien to the habits of French society,

* One work alone, which attacked the Marquess, is *said* to be his. But the evidence of authorship is very scanty, and it seems hardly fair, on such grounds, to charge him with so great a departure from his general line of conduct.

and severely outraged the feelings of those refined profligates who, reckoning vice itself nothing, hold indecorum to be the worst of enormities: in other words, prefer the semblance to the reality of virtue, and forgive one offence, if another, the worser crime of falsehood, be added to veil it from public view.

Accordingly, there was an outcry raised throughout all society, not in France only, but in Europe, at the unheard-of atrocity. A young woman had left her superannuated husband, whom she had, by the customs of aristocratic society, been compelled to take for her tyrant and tormentor, under the name of a husband, and had left him for one of an age nearer her own, and who sacrificed himself for her deliverance. The lovers had rebelled against those rules which regulated the vicious intercourse of nobles in legitimate France; they had outraged all the finer feelings of patrician nature, by refusing to lead a life of pretence, and treachery, and secret indulgence; they had even brought into jeopardy the long-established security of illicit intercourse, understood without being avowed; and the veil was thus about to be torn away from all the endearing immoralities that give occupation and interest to noble life, and break the calm monotony of an existence which demands that it never shall be ruffled but by voluntary excitements, nor ever let alone while it can be tickled into enjoyment. Hence all society (that is, all the upper and worthless portion of it) combined "*to a woman*" against the hapless pair; Mirabeau was regarded as a monster; and the conduct of his father, who hunted him over all Europe, and then flung him into a prison for the best years of his life, was excused by all, and blamed by none; while no one ever thought of *visiting* the other party with the slightest censure—no one ever ventured to "hint a doubt, or hesitate dislike," of that very father turning his wife, the mother of his daughters, out of doors, and installing a mistress in her room.

The darker portion of Mirabeau's conduct relates to *Sophie*—not to Madame le Monnier. When, under that name, he dragged her before the public, and indulged a loose and prurient fancy, in providing for the worst appetites of licentious minds, he became justly the object of aversion, and even of disgust; and ranged himself with the writers of obscene works, but took the precedence of these in profligacy, by making his own amours the theme of his abandoned contemplations.* It is the very worst passage in his history; and it is nearly the only one which admits neither defence nor palliation.

* The writings alluded to were the works of some of his hours of confinement during near four years of solitary imprisonment, and *may* have been afterwards used from necessity. If that was the cause of giving such shameful effusions publicity, we may well say that the offence of the composition, in such circumstances, disgusting as it was, merits the least grave portion of the blame.

The other grave charge to which he is exposed, of publishing the Berlin Correspondence, is, though on different grounds, alike without justification. In extenuation of it, it has been observed that the whole object of his existence depended upon the supplies which it furnished. His election in Provence would, without it, have been hopeless. But this is a sorry topic even of palliation.

But if all these and more vices, these and more fatal indiscretions, may be justly charged on Mirabeau, it is fit we ever should bear in mind the treatment which he constantly experienced from a parent whose heart had been alienated, and whose very reason had been perverted, by the arts of an intriguing woman. All the juvenile follies of the fiery young man are exaggerated; his conduct is condemned in the mass; if he does well, he is charged with caprice; if he errs, it is his diabolical nature that accounts for it. He marries; the match proves an unhappy one. He is kept generally without a shilling of allowance, and expected to live like a noble Provençal. He makes love to Madame le Monnier, and elopes with her; he is denounced as a monster; cited before a court of provincial *justice* (as it was termed), and condemned to death in his absence. He flies; he is pursued by his father with inexorable severity, and beset with spies, and even bravoes. Nothing can be more terrible than the excesses of parental rage to which family pride and personal prejudice had wrought up the Marquess's feelings. In furious letters the violent passions of the old noble break out. The good Bailli tries long and long to mediate and to soften; but at length even he is forced to bend before the storm; and the correspondence of the brothers presents only letters and answers, almost alike violent and determined against him. At length the Marquess succeeds in seizing his son's person, and he is immured for forty-two months in the fortress of Vincennes; only, after a long interval, allowed books and pen and ink; and never suffered to correspond without his letters being read by the governor, whose affections, as usual, he entirely gained.

On his liberation he had a painful interview with Madame le Monnier—his Sophie—who had been supposed faithless, and he charged her with the offence; she defended her conduct, and recriminated upon her lover, who, it may be presumed, could not so easily repel the accusation. They parted in mutual displeasure, and the estrangement, unhappily, was eternal. She remained in the monastery where she had taken refuge, until her husband's death; and then continued in an adjoining house, having formed an intimate friendship with the sisters of the convent. An attachment grew up between herself and a most deserving man, but who, unhappily, before their intended marriage could take place, was seized with pulmonary consumption, and died in her arms, after her assiduous and affectionate attendance of many months by his sick couch. An aged and worthy

physician and his wife had taken this ill-fated lady under their protection, and vainly endeavoured to console her. She had frequently before contemplated suicide, and always was resolved to seek refuge in it from her family's and her husband's persecutions. Some days before her last misfortune, an accidental death by the fumes of charcoal had happened in the neighbourhood, and drawn her attention to this mode of self-destruction. She had examined the particulars and made inquiries of the physician as to the experiment and its conditions. With her wonted decision of mind she took her resolution prospectively, and in the contemplation of her betrothed's death. With her wonted firmness of purpose she executed the resolve, and was found dead an hour after his decease, in her chamber, where she had placed a brasier of live charcoal, after closing the windows and the doors. Such are the facts respecting the end of this noble-minded and ill-fated woman; and they are attested by the evidence of the physician's family, of the nuns, and even of the inquiry judicially instituted by the local authorities. The mere date of the death, however, and the known courtship and intended marriage, are enough to convict of the most glaring falsehood those reports which soon after were spread by the implacable enemies of Mirabeau; and which, it is painful to think, found their way into works of great credit. Thus, one of the greatest historians of the Revolution says, that, on his liberation from Vincennes, he deserted Sophie, who put a period to her existence,—leaving it to be inferred that there was no quarrel: but that is comparatively immaterial, for the uncharitable may say he sought the quarrel to cover his intended desertion—but leaving it also to be inferred, which is absolutely untrue and indeed impossible, that her suicide was caused by his conduct.

The history of Mirabeau's private life, and his treatment by his family, forces upon the reader's mind one striking reflection upon the truly wretched state of society under the old *régime*. To the merciless Aristocracy which, under, perhaps we should rather say along with, the Despot, swayed the country, Mirabeau was indebted for the ill-treatment, nay, the persecution, of his father. To the same cause, the Marchioness, his mother, was indebted for her ill-assorted marriage, first with a man old enough to be her father, while she was an infant, and next to a man she never was loved by; and to the same cause she owed the persecution she encountered when his coldness had been turned into aversion. To the same cause, Madame le Monnier owed her forced marriage, when a girl, to a man old enough to be her great-grandfather, and the life of agony, rather than misery, she afterwards led. The powers of the Crown came in aid of Aristocratic pride and Aristocratic fury; and the State prison yawned to receive whatever victim was required by the demon of family pride or domestic tyranny,—aping, almost pass-

ing, the tyranny of the Crown. These are the blessings which the Revolution is charged with having torn from unhappy France! These are the glories, and this the felicity of the old *régime!* These are the goods which the gods of legitimacy provide for their votaries! And to regain these joys it is, that some men would assist the Carlist handful of priests and nobles against the thirty millions of our free and dauntless neighbours—just as, to perpetuate the like glories of absolute Monarchy and pure Aristocracy elsewhere, the same politicians are knit in the bands of hearty friendship with all that is most bigoted and despotical in countries not yet visited by the irresistible wave of General Reform!

It will complete the view of Mirabeau's character, if we add that he joined to extraordinary talents, and a most brilliant fancy, powers of application rarely found in such association; that his vigorous reasoning, whether from some natural defect of judgment, or from the influence of feeling and passion, often proved an unsafe guide, even in speculation, still oftener in action; that, slave as he too generally proved to the love of indulgence, his courage was ever sustained above all suspicion; that even his share of a virtue far more rare, true fortitude under calamity, surpassed that of most men; and that all the hardships he had undergone, and the torments he had suffered from so many forms of ingenious persecution, never for a moment infused any gall into a disposition originally and throughout benevolent and kind.

Of his genius, the best monuments that remain are his Speeches, and even these were not always his own composition. Both Dumont, Duroveray, and Pellenc, men of distinguished ability, did more than assist him in their production; but some of the finest are known to have been his own; and the greatest passages, those which produced the most magical effects, were the inspiration of the moment. His literary works were too often produced under the pressure of want, to be well digested, or carefully finished. The chief of them, his "Monarchie Prussienne," is no doubt a vast collection of statistical facts; and, as he had access to the whole of the information which was possessed by the government upon the subject, it is impossible to say that he has not so used his materials as to produce a work of value. Yet the arrangement is not peculiarly felicitous; nor are the proofs on which the statements rest sifted with much care; while the dissertations, that plentifully garnish it, are often very prolix, and founded upon economical principles, which, though generally sound, being, indeed, those of the modern system, are applied, as it were, by rote, to any case, and made the ground of decision, without the least regard to the limitations that must practically be introduced into the rules, or the exceptions that occur to their application. As for his intimate friend Major Mauvillon's share in this work, the

subject of so many exaggerations, he has himself frankly admitted that it was altogether subordinate, although of great importance, nay essential, to the execution of the plan. The military details, especially, owe to his talents and experience their principal value. The "Essai sur le Despotisme," his earliest political production, is, though severely judged by his own criticism, a work of extraordinary merit; and the "Considérations sur l'Agiotage," and the essay on "Lettres de Cachet," may probably be esteemed his best tracts. But we are here speaking of those writings which partake not of the oratorical character; for, to estimate Mirabeau's genius, we must look at the sudden and occasional productions of his pen, which resemble speeches more than books, and which, indeed, though never spoken, belong far more to the rhetorical than the literary or scientific class of writings. Among these the celebrated "Réponse aux Protestations des Possédant Fiefs," published in February, 1788, and written, as it were, off-hand, justly deserves the highest place; and it would be difficult to match it in the history of French eloquence.

Before closing these observations upon Mirabeau's merits as an author, it is fit to add that no man ever held the literary character higher, or comported himself more proudly in its investiture. He never but once published anything without his name; he never deemed that literary labour, for the purpose of just and honest gain, was other than a source of honour; he gloried in the name of author; and never was ashamed of his calling, of the labours which it imposed, or the privations which it entailed upon him. He has, in one striking passage of his very voluminous writings, expressed sentiments upon the importance of the Republic of Letters, and the feelings of literary men, so just and so useful for all to whom they apply, that it is proper to transcribe them, and give so wholesome a lesson more general circulation.

"Ah! s'ils se dévouaient loyalement au noble métier d'être utiles! Si leur indomptable amour-propre pouvait composer avec lui-même, et sacrifier la gloriole à la dignité! Si, au lieu de s'avilir, de s'entre-déchirer, de détruire réciproquement leur influence, ils réunissaient leurs efforts et leurs travaux pour terrasser l'ambitieux qui usurpe, l'imposteur qui égare, le lâche qui se vend; si, méprisant le vil métier de gladiateurs littéraires, ils se croisaient en véritables frères d'armes contre les préjugés, le mensonge, le charlatanisme, la superstition, la tyrannie, de quelque genre qu'elle soit, en moins d'un siècle la face de la terre serait changée!"

Of the violent and precocious physical temperament of Mirabeau, mention has already been made. A slight notice of his personal appearance may not inappropriately close this imperfect sketch. His ugliness was so great as almost to become proverbial; and features, naturally harsh and even distorted, were rendered still more repulsive by the deep furrows of the confluent small-pox. His natural vanity, almost as exaggerated as his deformity, even drew from its

excess the materials of gratification. "Personne" (he used to say) "ne connaît la puissance de ma laideur;" and he was wont to speak of its "*sublimity*." The power of his eye, however, was undeniable, and the spirit and expression which his mind threw into all his countenance made it, how plain soever, anything rather than uninteresting or disgusting. The arch reply of M. de Talleyrand is well known, as illustrative alike of Mirabeau's mental and bodily imperfections. He was dilating upon the qualities which must meet in whoever should aspire to govern France under a free constitution, and was enunciating, "Il faut qu'il soit éloquent—fougueux—noble" —and many other qualities notoriously possessed by himself—when the witty and wily statesman added, "Et qu'il soit tracé de la petite vérole, n'est-ce pas?"

We have hitherto been dwelling upon the private history and the personal qualities of this celebrated individual, whose political history is intimately mixed up with the first stage of the French revolution, and whose public character has been sketched by so fine a pen,* that humbler artists may well abandon the task in despair. But, before adding the few remarks required by this subject, one may be offered which the daughter of Necker could less easily make. We may express the indignation with which every man of good feelings, and indeed of sound principles, must regard his attacks upon that venerable man. That he there suffered personal dislike to guide his pen and direct his conduct cannot be doubted. Nor can any one avoid agreeing with his candid and even favourable commentator, the amiable, and eloquent and sensible Dumont, in his reprobation of the sudden turn which his course took when policy required a suspension of hostilities; and the quick transition from menaced and even boasted destruction to absolute neutrality—hardly to be exceeded by the scandalous scenes, so disgusting to all honourable minds, in later times enacted before our eyes, by certain politicians of the present day. Nothing can exceed the acrimony of Mirabeau towards Necker, except the mild and dignified patience, approaching to indifference, of that excellent man, under the attack.

Although it is undeniable that his whole conduct in the scenes which made him and all France a politician, his spirit and his capacity—and above all, his readiness, his fertility of resources, and his brilliant eloquence,—constantly appeared, and always produced with certainty their natural effect, of influencing the course of events in a marvellous degree; yet it may be fairly questioned if, in all that eventful history so made to try men's souls, one individual appeared whose conduct was more under the interested impulse of merely selfish feelings, and guided by more exclusively personal calculations

* Madame de Staël, "Sur la Révolution Française."

of interest. Living in times when even the coldest natures were kindled with patriotic zeal, and the most calculating were carried away into a forgetfulness of their own interests, he, whose nature was fiery, and whose conduct had been a tissue of indiscretions, seems to have always practised enthusiasm as a means towards an end, and to have made the speculations for his own benefit—first in power, next in profit—the business of his public life. With all his warmth of eloquence, all his admirably acted passion, all his effective display of ready feeling, as each occasion required, it may be safely affirmed that Robespierre himself showed far more genuine zeal for the propagation of his principles, far more fanaticism in his devotion to popular rights, a far more unquenchable hatred of courts, and of every tyranny but his own.

Mirabeau contributed by his courage and his eloquence to the destruction of the old monarchy more than any one individual, more even than Necker did by his weakness and his inconsistency. His was the first eloquence that emancipated France ever experienced. Admitted at length to assist in popular assemblies, addressed as the arbiter of the country's fate, called to perform their part by debating and hearing debates, it was by Mirabeau that the people were first made to feel the force of the orator, first taught what it was to hear spoken reason and spoken passion; and the silence of ages in those halls was first broken by the thunder of his voice echoing through the lofty vaults now covering multitudes of excited men. That his eloquence should in such circumstances pass for more than its value was inevitable; and that its power should be prodigious in proportion to the novelty of the occasion, was quite a matter of course. No one ever ruled assemblies, either of the people or of their representatives, with a more absolute sway; none ever reaped an ampler harvest of popular sympathy and popular applause than he did when he broke up the public mind lying waste in France, and never till then touched or subdued by the Rhetorician's art. But no sooner had he overthrown all the institutions of the monarchy than he entered into treaty with the court, to whose weakness his influence had become necessary as a restorative or a prop. It is possible, no doubt, that he may have felt the perils in which he had involved the country; but it is certain that the price of his assistance in rescuing her was stipulated with all the detail of the most sordid chaffering; and it is as undeniable that, had not death taken him from the stage at the moment of his greatest popularity, he must have stood or sunk before the world in a few weeks, as a traitor to the people, purchased with a price, and that price a large sum and a large income in the current coin of the realm.*

* The shameful contract, signed by both parties, Count d'Artois and Mirabeau himself, is preserved, and is printed in Lafayette's Memoirs.

Nor was his first embarking in the revolutionary struggle the dictate of democratic principle, the result of any dream of equal liberty. A patrician by birth, aristocratic by nature, pampered by luxurious habits, the vortex of popular contention and sweeping levelling change was no element for him to breathe in, nor was republican simplicity the natural hue and pattern of his artificial habits. But he had quarrelled with that order which he alone valued, and whose friendly intercourse alone he could bear; he found the circle of fashion shut against his vices, and, as madame de Staël has not more wittily than correctly phrased it, he set fire to the edifice of society in order to force open the doors of the Paris drawing-rooms to himself. ("Il fallait mettre le feu à l'édifice social, pour que les portes des salons de Paris lui fussent ouvertes.")

It is another trait of the same master, and as just as the former, that, like all unprincipled men, he saw all along only his own interest in the affairs of his country, and his foresight was bounded by his selfishness. ("Comme tous les hommes sans morale, il vit d'abord son intérêt personnel dans la chose publique, et sa prévoyance fut bornée par son égoïsme.") The truth which this reflection discloses is of great account in contrasting the conduct of statesmen, as it is of the last importance in its relation to all public affairs. Nothing can more fetter the powers of the understanding than selfish and profligate principles; nothing more disqualify men for noble enterprise; nothing more obstruct, more contract the current of state affairs. The fatal influence of a bad disposition, of loose principles, of unworthy feelings, over the intellectual powers, is a topic of frequent use, not with the preacher so much as with the moral philosopher; because it is of a nature too refined for an ordinary audience. But it is an important chapter in psychology, as well as in ethics; and, unfortunately, the illustrations which it derives from facts are by no means confined to those which the secret manners of courts and the annals of absolute monarchy furnish to the student of history. Popular governments supply even more largely their quota of this contribution; because it is there chiefly that political genius can shine, and it is there that the sinister influence of bad principles interposes to obscure and to eclipse its rays. The habitual love of place; the aversion to serve the people without ruling over them; the repugnance to give up the station once possessed; to tear from the lips the intoxicating cup of power, when honour and duty commands that it shall pass—what dismal havoc has this made in the fairest prospects of usefulness and of fame—but also how mournfully has it marred the noblest features in the aspect of political genius! The visible face of public affairs, the page of parliamentary history in our own country, bears a sad testimony to this melancholy truth. But the mischief stops not here. If we see so many instances of

bright prospects clouded over when the gifts of the understanding have been displayed, before the malignant influence of selfish interests obscured or perverted them—how many more cases must there be of a similar bias having prevented their ever being disclosed! Who can tell how much heavenly genius may lie buried under the mass of earth-born sordid influence—how often the genial current of the soul may have been frozen by base, calculating, selfish policy—or, in how many hearts, pregnant with celestial fire, the spark may have been extinguished ere yet it kindled into flame; extinguished by the cold and sordid propensity to seek office and to keep it, so epidemic among statesmen in modern times, and among all who aspire to be statesmen? Mirabeau was assuredly not one of these; but his genius had no sooner blazed forth in the first scenes of the Revolution, than it was cramped in all its aspirations by the baser materials which predominated in his extraordinarily mixed nature.

He did not nearly reach the ordinary term of the lives of statesmen, less nearly by six or seven years than Mr. Pitt, for he died at forty-two; but he lived in times where each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend; and he thus lived long enough to show all that he could have attained if his life had been prolonged to the usual period. Had he perished a few weeks earlier, perhaps a few days, some doubt might have existed over the course which awaited him if he had survived; for his purchase by the court was but just completed when he died, and his eagerness to be bought had made him precipitately hurry on the completion of the bargain. Of one thing we cannot doubt, that in a few months, possibly weeks, he would have become hateful to the people whose idol he was at his death, and that his whole influence, his character for patriotism, his reputation for political courage, even the fame of his talents, would have perished in attempting to earn the stipulated price, by vain efforts to stem the revolutionary torrent which he, more than any one, had let loose, and to save the court to whom he had sold himself after accomplishing its destruction. It is probable that he would have emigrated, and lived obscure and penniless abroad. It is next to certain that, had he remained in France, he would have been among the first victims of the reign of terror; and, the daring profligacy of his conduct offering an almost solitary instance of personal corruption among the errors and the crimes of the day, he would have left behind him a less enviable reputation, unless for cruelty of which he had nothing, than even the worst of the men whose unprincipled but fanatical ambition soon after his decease deluged France in blood and convulsed all Europe in war.

CARNOT.

It is impossible to find a greater contrast than the solid genius and severe virtue of Carnot presents to all the qualities of that brilliant and worthless person whom we have just been contemplating.* Endowed with the greatest faculties of the understanding—cultivating these with the assiduity which to an ordinary capacity is of absolute necessity, but which an exalted one cannot despise if mighty deeds are to be done—exercising them through a long life upon the worthiest objects—despising all the outward accomplishments that dazzle the vulgar—nor even addicting himself to the practice of those arts which enable the natural leaders of mankind to guide the multitude—and seeking only for the influence over other minds which was to be acquired by the actions that his own enabled him to perform—Carnot offers to the admiration of posterity, as he did to his own times, a rare instance of the triumphs of purely intellectual excellence without one single adventitious aid, whether from station, or from wealth, or from the attraction of superficial or ornamental qualities, or from the happy accidents of fortune. We trace at every step his sterling worth producing its appropriate effect without external aid of any sort; to each successive eminence which he reached we see him raised by merit alone; in all his conflicts with adversity, with oppression, with difficulties of every sort and magnitude, almost with nature herself in some instances, we observe the struggle of intellectual superiority; and the commanding position which he thus took, he retained by the same means, nor to maintain it ever stooped a hair's breadth from the lofty attitude in which he had always climbed nor ever crawled.

This in any state of affairs is a prodigious merit—in one of change and uncertainty and revolution it is incomparably more rare and more to be admired; but it is not the highest claim to our respect which this great man prefers. His genius was exalted, and it was surpassed by his virtue. An absolute self-denial in all the particulars where human passions bear most sway over ordinary minds; an immoveable fortitude in all those situations in which human weakness is most apt to yield; a courage of every kind, from the highest to the most vulgar, from the courage of the statesman to that of the grenadier; the active valour of braving danger, and the calmness which can command every faculty of the soul in the midst of extreme perils; an entire devotion to the maintenance of his principles at any

* Mirabeau.

personal sacrifices and at all hazards; an enthusiastic zeal for the service of his country and his kind; all embellished by a modesty which made the glory of his exertions only feel cumbrous to him—these rare qualities seemed to revive the old Roman for the admiration, if not for the imitation and improvement, of a degenerate age—but to these was added a tenderness of disposition which the old Roman either strove to stifle within him, or to which his nature was alien and strange.

The modesty which has just been remarked as a distinguishing feature of his character, and his carelessness about the opinion entertained of his conduct, provided he acted so as to satisfy his own conscience according to his own sense of duty, have conspired to give him a very different place in the estimation of the world at large from that which belongs to him of right—making his genius be undervalued and his moral worth misconceived. Some details become therefore necessary upon both these points.

His aptitude and his taste for military affairs, destined afterwards to perform so important a part in the history of Europe, displayed itself in a singular manner while yet a child. Being taken for the first time to a theatre where some siege or other warlike operation was represented, he astonished the audience by interrupting the piece to complain of the manner in which the general had disposed his men and his guns, crying out to him that his men were in fire, and calling upon him loudly to change his position. In fact the men were so placed as to be commanded by a battery. The mathematical sciences absorbed his whole attention for some years; and his celebrated Theorem on the Measure of Lost Forces, published early in life, shows with what success his studies were pursued. But his reading was general; his feelings were ever alive to the duties of a man and a citizen; his enthusiasm was kindled by nothing so much as by the records of benevolent and patriotic actions. That eloquence, the result of strong feelings and a correct taste, would have been his in no common measure had he studied words as much as things, we have the strongest proof in the success of his first production, the *Eloge de Vauban*, crowned by the Academy of Dijon, and from which a passage of singular beauty, admirably characteristic of the writer, may be cited:—"C'était un de ces hommes que la nature a donné au monde tout formés à la bienfaisance; doués, comme l'abeille, d'une activité innée pour le bien général; qui ne peuvent séparer leur sort de celui de la république, et qui, membres intimes de la société, vivent, prospèrent, souffrent, et languissent avec elle."

His habitual courage was displayed on this occasion; the panegyric boldly bestowed by him on Montalembert gave inexpressible offence, and caused him to be confined in Vincennes under a lettre

de cachet; one of the causes probably of the hatred which he so steadily showed to arbitrary power.

But scenes now approached which were destined to suspend his scientific pursuits, and to rouse his political energies. He saw the earlier portion of the Revolution unmoved; but he was the first military man who joined it, having then the rank of Lieutenant of Engineers, and he was elected as deputy for St. Omer to the Legislative Assembly. He sat in judgment on the King, and voted for his death; but his absence on a military commission prevented him from taking part in the highly reprehensible proceedings which led to the trial. Of these he loudly disapproved; but when the whole had been fixed, he considered himself as in the position of a judge called upon to determine a question already prepared, brought before him ripe for decision, and to which he had no choice but to deliver his opinion, whatever that might be.

In April, 1793, was formed the celebrated Committee of Public Safety; that body which has filled the world with the renown of its great actions, the terror of its name, and the infamy of its crimes.* The country was then threatened with invasion from every point; a march upon Paris was the avowed object of the allies; insurrections were plotting, aided by foreigners in every part of France; one great province was in open rebellion; Paris abounded in parties resolved on destroying the revolutionary and restoring the ancient Government—when a general sense of the absolute necessity for a vigorous, concentrated, united executive power to control disaffection and apply the national force in defence of the State, both against foreign and domestic enemies, gave birth to the famous Committee, which immediately proceeded to rule with a sceptre of iron, and to war with the sword of millions. Of this Committee, Carnot, then only a

* It is only justice to observe, that, as the guilty are generally made answerable for more than they have perpetrated, so this body has been incorrectly supposed to have done much that was really the work of others. It never possessed any other function but that of putting persons on their trial; and the Court, it could hardly be called of justice, the Revolutionary Tribunal, was altogether the creation and generally the creature of the Convention. But even that hateful tribunal, far worse than the Committee, acquitted many more than it condemned; and as each cause was defended, so it is well known that no advocate ever suffered for the freedom of his defence. It is far from being the design of this note to lessen the execration justly felt of those crimes which covered the French name with disgrace, which paved the way for the subjugation of the Republic, which facilitated the extinction of public liberty, and indeed ended in the conquest of France. But it was observed by a sagacious and philosophical person, well acquainted with the history of his country, and to whose suggestions this sketch is greatly indebted, that the remarks in the text seemed, if unqualified, to sanction the common opinion entertained in foreign countries, which confounds together the Committee and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and cast upon the former body all that was done by the Convention and the Clubs.

Lieutenant of Engineers, was named a member, after it had existed for two months; and, as it was immediately found wholly impossible to pursue the plan first laid down for its operations, of discussing fully each act to be done and then deciding upon it by a majority of voices, a division was made of the labours, and a distribution of the members in departments, each being alone the ruler of his own province, and alone held responsible for its measures, although a certain number of signatures was required to give the acts of each validity. The whole department of war, as well the organization of the military force as its operations in the field, was assigned to Carnot. Others, as Robert Lindet, and Prieur de la Côte d'Or, were appointed to superintend the Commissariat and Armament departments; but those whom the world has most heard of, most dreaded, and most justly execrated, were the five to whom was given up the superintendence of the Police—Robespierre, Couthon, Billaud Varennes, St. Just, and Collot d'Herbois—all of whom, except St. Just, a young man of an enthusiastic temperament, and, until corrupted by absolute power, of a virtuous disposition, were regarded in their own day, and will be loathed by succeeding ages, as among the greatest monsters that ever disgraced the human name.* The annals of ancient tyrants alone present scenes of darker atrocity than the reign of terror; for the massacres by the Bourbons on the Eve of St. Bartholomew, and by the Irish Papists in 1641, though more prodigal of blood, were a momentary ebullition of religious fury, and not, like those of the guillotine, deliberately perpetrated with the mockery of justice, under her outraged form, and in her profaned name.

In these horrid scenes the enemies of Carnot have, of course, endeavoured to implicate him; and it is not to be denied that many impartial observers have formed an opinion condemnatory of his conduct. That he remained in office with such detestable men as his colleagues; that he was aware of all their proceedings; that he even signed the orders of execution in his turn, complying with the regulation already mentioned; that he thus made himself legally responsible for all those atrocious acts of absolute power cruelly exercised —is not to be questioned, and no one can venture to hold with entire confidence the opinion that this responsibility did not extend much further, and involve him in the actual and enormous guilt of deeds which, at all events, and from whatever motive, he sanctioned by his participation, leaving mankind to infer, from his silence, that they had his approval. Yet his position, and that of his country, must be well considered before we pass so severe a censure upon his conduct. He began to administer the war department, had made some progress

* Carnot himself, admitting always Robespierre to have been exceedingly bad, said there were two a good deal worse, Billaud and Collot.

in his functions, and had gained brilliant success, before his colleagues commenced their reign of terror. His defence is, that, had he yielded to the natural feelings of abhorrence, and followed his own inclinations, the country was conquered, possibly partitioned—far worse injury inflicted upon his fellow-citizens—far more blood spilt—far more lasting disgrace incurred by the nation—far more permanent disasters entailed upon all classes of the people—than all that the terrorist executions and confiscations could produce. Had he any right, then, to refuse his aid, thus required for averting such calamities? Was it not enough for him to know that his retirement would certainly not have stayed the proscription, while it most probably would have opened the gates of Paris to the Allies? Was it not sufficient for his conscience that he felt wholly innocent of the crimes perpetrated by his colleagues? And, knowing his character to be above reproach, had he a right to sacrifice his country to a regard for his reputation? This question he could answer in those memorable words of Danton—"*Périsse ma réputation plutôt que ma patrie.*"

But it may be urged that such passages, such elections, are of dangerous example, *decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile*; and also, that the defence assumes the fact, both of his having constantly disapproved of the proceedings of Terror, and of his having adhered to the government of the Terrorists from no sinister motive. To the first objection it would not be easy to return a satisfactory answer, unless by urging the extremity of the case in which he was called upon to make his election, and the prodigious magnitude of the evils between which he had to choose. Nor will any one be convinced by such considerations who is inclined to hold that, in questions of blood-guiltiness, we are forbidden to regard any consequences, and bound each to keep his own hands at all events pure. It may, however, be well to reflect, that many persons are parties to crimes, such as the waging of unjust and murderous wars, nay, even to the oppression and ruin of individuals by measures of state, and yet escape censure, upon no other ground than that they confine their exertions to their own department, leaving the whole blame to rest upon the guilty actors; and if it should be said that Carnot's withdrawing his sanction from the proscriptions might have arrested the course of his bloodthirsty colleagues, it is at the least equally sure that, if all who disapproved of an unjust war refused to play their parts in it—if generals and officers and soldiers withheld their concurrence—no statesman, be he ever so wicked or ever so powerful, could cover the face of the earth with the slaughter and fire and pillage of war.

But the question of fact is easily and satisfactorily answered; for we are possessed of evidence which acquits him of all participation

in the crimes of the day, and also of circumstances in his history which serve as a test of his motives in continuing to direct the military operations while Robespierre presided over the internal policy of the state. The arrangement of the Committee in departments to which reference has been made is established in the written protest previously drawn up by Robert Lindet for his own exculpation. Carnot's name being affixed without any knowledge even of the lists, and as a mere form, seems proved by the accidental circumstance of his having signed the warrant for the arrest of his confidential secretary, this happening to be issued by Robespierre in the week when it was Carnot's turn to sign. On some occasions he assisted at the police sittings of the Committee, and then he is represented by the Royalist authors themselves as having "saved more lives than all that his colleagues sacrificed." The hatred of his colleagues and their constant threats of vengeance are well known. It was his keeping aloof from all participation in the bloody orgies of their councils; his openly reprobating their proceedings; his fearlessly blaming the destruction of the Brissotines in particular; that made the fanatical St. Just charge him with Moderantism, and insist upon his being tried for the offence; that made Robespierre, in lamenting the necessity of having him among their number as the consequence of his own ignorance of military affairs, call him, with unspeakable bitterness of spirit, "l'odieux Carnot." Nay, we have it from Carnot himself, that Robespierre's answer to the constant requisitions made for his destruction was in these words:—"Dans ce moment l'on ne pourrait pas se passer de lui; mais attendez jusqu'à ce qu'il ne nous soit plus indispensable, ou bien jusqu'à ce que nos armées subissent quelque revers—et alors sa tête tombera; je vous en réponds."*

It is fair, too, that we should regard the rest of his conduct, in order to have a test of the purity of his motives in the greatest exigency. Not only he always set himself against anything like party or the acquisition of personal influence; not only did he constantly refuse, and at the daily risk of his life, even to enter the door of the Jacobin or any other Club; but we know that his courage was displayed in nobly doing his duty, utterly careless of consequences, where these could only affect himself. In June, 1792, he exposed himself to the furious resentment of the army, by declaring in his report the massacre of Dillon and Beaugeand to be the "acts of Cannibals." As often as any matter was referred to his investigation, his reports were made without the least regard to their either displeasing the people, injuring the progress of his principles, or exas-

* Robespierre's words, as repeated by General Carnot himself to the writer of these pages, in 1814.

perating the Government against him; and when he received orders, though in a subordinate capacity, to do anything of which he strongly disapproved, he fearlessly encountered the risk of his head by a peremptory refusal; as when he refused to arrest an unpopular general, while acting as Deputy with the Army of the North. He who could cite such acts of moral courage, as performed in such times, might well challenge credit for being influenced by no sense of personal danger, or any other unworthy motive, in adhering to the Terrorists while their power was at its height.

It is worthy of remark how entirely those who most condemn Carnot for the compliances now under discussion have forgotten the conduct of others who have sanctioned as great crimes without any portion of his excuse. No one more loudly blamed him, for example, than Talleyrand, and yet Talleyrand continued the principal minister, not only of Napoleon, during his Spanish, Swiss, and Russian wars,* but of the Executive Directory, during the proscription of Fructidor, when sixty-three Deputies and thirteen Journalists were arrested in their beds, carried through the provinces in cages like wild beasts, amidst the revilings of the infuriated mob, and crowded into the hold of a convict-ship to perish miserably in the swamps of Guiana.†

In these reflections no reference has been made to the private character of Carnot, his unsullied purity in all the relations of private

* The comparison of these wars to the judicial murders of Paris may seem unjust towards the former. But, although the glory of war encircles its horrible atrocities with a false glare which deceives us as to its blood-guiltiness, in what does the crime of Napoleon, when he sacrificed thousands of lives to his lust of foreign conquest, differ from that of Robespierre when he sought domestic power by slaying hundreds of his fellow-citizens? In one particular there is more atrocity in the crimes of the latter; they were perpetrated under the name and form of justice, whose sanctity they cruelly profaned; but, on the other hand, far more blood was spilt, far more wide-spreading and lengthened misery occasioned to unoffending provinces, by the invasions of Spain, and Switzerland, and Russia, than by all the acts of the Committee, the Convention, and the Revolutionary Tribunal. Nor will mankind ever be free from the scourge of war until they learn to call things by their proper names, to give crimes the same epithets, whatever outward form they may assume, and to regard with equal abhorrence the conqueror who slakes his thirst of dominion with the blood of his fellow-creatures, and the more vulgar criminal, who is executed for taking the life of a wayfaring man that he may seize upon his purse.

† It deserves to be remarked that the virtuous Lafayette, whose memoirs and correspondence have been given to the world by his family, although he often makes mention of Carnot, and held in more abhorrence than perhaps any other man the whole reign of Terror, his hatred of which was indeed the cause of all his own misfortunes, yet never speaks disparagingly of the great Minister: on the contrary, whenever he can find an opportunity, his tone is apologetic; and in one passage, particularly, he expressly says that the Committee of Public Safety only had the use of his name, not the disposal of his person.—(See tome iv., pp. 334, 355; and v. pp. 110, 217.)

life, and the incorruptible integrity of his public administration, as far as money was concerned. The reason of this omission is obvious. Although the private reputation of some Terrorists was almost as much tarnished as their public conduct, it is certain that others, perhaps the greater number, and among them certainly Robespierre, were of irreproachable lives. As to corruption, it was imputable to few or none of them;* indeed the generally-received phrase was that they had all vices saving this. The men who had, unwatched, the distribution of the whole revenues of France, distributed among themselves monthly the sum of 360 francs for all their expenses; and when Robespierre was put to death, the whole property found in his possession was thirty-six of the last supply thus issued to him.† Carnot, in like manner, never received a farthing of the public money for his official services; but, in a different respect, his singular disinterestedness was truly striking: it was peculiar to himself, and it proved to demonstration how entirely every selfish *feeling* was absorbed in his zeal for the public service. Though at the head of all military affairs, he never received his own promotion in the army more rapidly than the most friendless subaltern. He was only a lieutenant when he came into office. He was but a captain while directing the operations of fourteen armies, and bestowing all ranks, all commands, upon his brother officers. It was not till the latter part of his Directorship that he became colonel, and he remained colonel only while king of the country. These passages may well be cited as throwing a strong light upon the purity of his motives, when his conduct is equivocal, and the facts are referable to either good motives or bad. They seem quite enough to prove that when he went wrong, the error was one of the judgment and not of the heart.

But, if a considerable difference of opinion exists, and ever will divide men's minds, upon the moral character of Carnot, upon his genius for affairs there can be none at all. The crisis was truly appalling when he undertook the military administration of the Republic. The remains of Dumourier's army were chased from post to post; Valenciennes, Mentz, Condé, had fallen; two Spanish armies attacked the line of the Pyrenees; another invasion was advancing from Piedmont on that of the Alps; La Vendée was in the hands of the rebels, who threatened the capital itself of the province at the head of 40,000 armed peasantry, of all troops the most formidable in

* Danton was not a member of the Committee of Public Safety. He was known to be sold to the Court. His price was 90,000 fr., paid, and promises of more. Montmorin (whose execution he caused) had his receipt for the money. Yet did this wretch come to the bar and demand Lafayette's head for the king's escape.

† These simple republicans divided their monthly allowances into rouleaus of 12 fr., being their daily expenditure; and three of these, unexpended, were found in Robespierre's desk.

such a country; Marseilles and Lyons had separated themselves by force from the Republican government; and an English fleet rode in the harbour of Toulon. Every one knows how swiftly this scene was reversed, the enemy on all points driven back, offensive operations resumed, the neighbouring countries subjugated, and the terrible Republic installed as the Conqueror of Europe, instead of expecting her fate at the hands of a hundred foes. In less than a year and a half of this unparalleled administration, the brilliant results of the campaign were 27 victories, 8 of them in pitched battles; 120 actions of lesser moment, 116 regular fortresses or great towns taken, 36 of them, after regular sieges, and 230 lesser forts carried; 80,000 of the enemy slain, 91,000 made prisoners, 3,800 cannon, 70,000 muskets, and 90 colours captured. These marvels are known to the world, and on these the splendid fame of this great man rests. But it is not so well known that he conducted alone the whole correspondence of fourteen armies; that wherever he could not repose absolute confidence in his General, he gave his detailed instructions from Paris: that from time to time he repaired to the spot and saw that his orders were followed, or informed himself how they should be modified, sometimes making the circuit of five or six armies during one tour of inspection; and that, where the fortune of a battle was that of the nation, as at Wattignies, and his taking the field in person could turn the fate of the day, he put himself, in his civic dress, at the head of the troops, and, after performing prodigies of valour, gained a decisive victory, and saved the Capital itself. In the whole history of war and of administration there is perhaps no second instance of anything like his instructions to Pichegru for the campaign of 1794. Hardly a battle was fought, or a place masked, or a siege formed, or a corps posted, that these orders did not previously designate and arrange; nor does the narrative of that victorious campaign differ from the previous orders for conducting it, except in the tense of the verbs employed, and in the filling up a few names of the more obscure places, or the less important affairs.

It remains to apply the severest and the surest of all tests to his brilliant career, the value of the men whom he promoted, and by whom he was served. Hoche's merit he at once discovered while a serjeant of foot, from a plan of operations which he had given in. Buonaparte himself was placed by him at the head of the great Army of Italy, while wholly unknown by any achievement, except by the genius which he showed at Paris in his dispositions for fighting the Battle of the Sections. He was then a young man of five-and-twenty, and had never shown any talent in regular war except on a very small scale at the siege of Toulon. Carnot, without any hesitation, after observing his conduct at Paris, gave him the chief command of the Republic's most important and difficult campaign, against the whole

force of Austria and Italy. It might suit the Emperor's views afterwards to forget the obligation which he owed, and to seek a poor justification of his ingratitude in attempting to undervalue his patron, of whose military administration he often spoke slightingly to his courtiers. But a letter now lies before us, dated 10 Floreal, An. 4 (June, 1796), from his head-quarters at Cherasco, after the battles of Lodi and Arcola, in which he tells Carnot, then Director, and again at the head of the War Department, that the treaty with Sardinia enables him to receive communications through Turin in half the time of the longer route, and adds, "Je pourrais donc recevoir promptement vos ordres, et connaître vos intentions pour la direction à donner à l'armée;" and in a former letter to the Finance Minister he had said "that with the command of the army he had received a plan of offensive war prescribed to him, and the execution of which required prompt measures and extraordinary funds." A despatch of Carnot's is also before us of a somewhat earlier date, *chalking out* generally the plan of operations; generally, no doubt; *for the great* Director well knew when to tie down his instruments by special instructions, and when to leave a large latitude to those who deserved and obtained his entire confidence.

It is unnecessary to add that the other generals, at the same time employed to carry the French flag in triumph over Europe, were also men of first-rate military capacity—Massena, Joubert, Lannes, Moreau. Nor ought we to forget that the resources of all other sciences were brought by the War Minister to bear upon the military art; that by him chemistry, geodesy, mechanics, aërostation *itself*, were laid under contribution for the benefit of the tactician; that, above all, the foundations were laid of that magnificent system of Public Education so invaluable for all the departments of the state, the Polytechnic School, one of the most glorious monuments of the spirit of improvement that have survived the changes of both Revolution and Restoration.

When Carnot quitted the Committee of Public Safety in the latter part of 1794, the confidence of his countrymen was signally manifested towards him. No fewer than fourteen places chose him at once for their representative in the Council of Five Hundred. In 1795 he accepted the place of Director and the Administration of the War Department, at a moment of almost as great public disaster as when he first came into the executive government two years before. Had any selfish feeling ever found a place in his bosom,—above all, had personal vanity been its inmate,—he would have held aloof at this crisis of affairs, left the new constitution to work its way, and let the world believe that, as disaster had succeeded to victory when he quitted the government, so all the military glory of France was bound up in his ministry. But he scorned all personal feelings;

he knew only the motives of a statesman, harboured only the sentiments of a patriot, acknowledged only the claims of his country. At once he obeyed her summons, and in a few weeks victory again resorted to her standard.

So brilliant a career was destined to a premature close. It is believed by most observers, that at every period of the Revolution the great majority of the French people, except in the capital, were adverse to republican principles;* and the elections of 1797, the first that were held under the new constitution, returned a majority of Royalists and moderate Reformers to the councils. The first acts of the new representatives showed for what they were prepared. A noted Royalist was elected, in the person of Pichegru, President of the Five Hundred; and counter-revolutionary propositions were openly discussed in that assembly. The majority of the Directory formed their determination with promptitude; and resolved upon an act of violence (*coup d'état*) for which they found a precedent in the history of Oliver Cromwell, who had purged the Parliament of all doubtful members by a military force stationed at the door. To this proposition Carnot, however he might lament the unfavourable aspect of the new majority, steadily refused his consent. As soon as he was aware of the intentions of his colleagues, he might have secured himself and destroyed them by at once denouncing their plot to the councils. But he was far above all acts that even wore the semblance of treachery; and he became the sacrifice to his unchangeable integrity. Proscribed with the party which he most disliked, and proscribed because he would not join in breaking the law to reach them and to destroy them, he narrowly escaped alive, and led the life of an exile from the country he had twice saved, until, after some years of disgrace, distraction, and defeat, the never-failing consequences o his quitting office, he was recalled by the revolution which destroyed the Directorial power and placed Napoleon upon the Consular throne.

In that retirement his favourite science was his constant resource. His mathematical studies, never wholly abandoned, were resumed with all the zeal of his younger years, and the fruit of these worthy occupations was the composition of those works which give him so

* The saying of Barrere is well known: "Il y a une république—il n'y a pas de républicains." Soulavie, formerly a member of the Gironde, boasted that his party, on the 10th of August, accomplished what was plainly "against the wishes of the country," *i.e.* the destruction of monarchy, "with 3000 workmen." Petion declared that at that time there were only five republicans in all France. Collot d'Herbois and Merlin de Thionville, in an altercation with him, said, "Nous avons fait le dix d'Août sans vous, et nous allons faire la république contre vous." Nay, as late as 3rd July, 1791, we find Merlin (Douay) himself speaking of the abolition of royalty with horror, as the synonyme of "une guerre civile affreuse," and arguing on the utter impossibility of forming a republic in an extensive country. (*Mém. de Lafayette*, iii. 363. *Lettre de Merlin.*)

high a place among mathematicians. Even in an age when analytical methods have eclipsed the more beautiful, though far less powerful, investigations of geometry, his *Géométrie de la Position* is justly admired for the singular elegance and unexpected generality of the theorems,* as well as the acuteness of many of its general doctrines.† His treatise on the Principles of the different departments of Calculus is a masterly work, alike admirable for its clearness, its profound sagacity, and its happy illustrations. Nor can any writer be named who has so well described and explained the Calculus of Variations as he has done in that work. In these sublime researches this great patriot sought consolation amidst the misfortunes which the incapacity and the profligacy of his former colleagues, Barras and Rewbel, were daily bringing upon France; as far as any occupation that left him the power of reflecting upon passing events could yield him comfort, while he saw the fruits of his labours, the victories which he had gained for his country, torn from her—her independence once more threatened by foreign enemies—her bosom torn with intestine distractions—her territory desolated by the projects of counter-revolution.

From the return of Napoleon he expected the termination of those calamities, and with all the friends of liberty, he hailed the elevation of the Consul to power with patriotic delight. Under him he resumed his functions as War Minister, but resigned them the moment he perceived that the Consul harboured projects hostile to public liberty. His republican attachments were recorded in his votes against the Consulship for Life and the Imperial title. He remained in a private state, devoted to scientific pursuits, until Napoleon's reverses and those of France seemed to call for all the help she could receive from every good citizen; and he then wrote that memorable letter, which, in a few simple words, expressed at once his devotion to his country and his adherence to the principles of freedom. The concluding sentence is remarkable. After making a tender of his military services in modest terms, he adds—"Il est encore temps pour vous, Sire, de conquérir une paix glorieuse et de faire que l'amour du grand peuple vous soit rendu." The offer was at once accepted, and he was sent to defend Antwerp, where his military genius shone conspicuous, but was eclipsed by his tender care of the inhabitants; and they addressed to him, on his departure, a wish, at once simple and affecting, to possess in their great church some memorial of a governor so much respected and so dearly loved.

The last words that Napoleon addressed to him when he left Paris after the battle of Waterloo are remarkable, and they carry a memorable lesson to shortsighted, ambitious, and unprincipled men. "*Carnot, je vous ai connu trop tard!*" Truly tyrants, and they who

* Chap. VI. † Disc. Prélim.

would play the tyrant's part, are the last to make acquaintance with the worth of such men as Carnot. Far sweeter to their ear is the accent of flattery, the soft tone of assent and obeisance, than the stern, grating, hoarse sound of the independent voice, the honest and natural strains that convey wholesome truth, and threaten manly resistance to wicked schemes. Had the virtue of Washington found any place in Napoleon's bosom, the first man clasped to it would have been the inflexible republican, the indomitable patriot, the untameable lover of freedom, who regarded all his own glories, all his triumphs over the enemy, as nothing, unless they subdued the foes of liberty and of France. But he who only valued his victories as a ladder to the throne—who made no account of his laurels unless as they covered the fruit, the forbidden fruit, of arbitrary power—only followed the bent of his evil nature, in driving far from him an eye he durst not meet, a look which reproached him, and an arm whose vengeance conscience told him he deserved to encounter. The stuff of which he would make his courtiers was far different from Carnot's. His palace-gates flew open to the congenial spirits of the courtly parasites, whom, be it spoken with respect as with shame, the National Institute contained within its body, who, by an unanimous vote,* as disgraceful as ever proceeded from even literary servility, erased Carnot's name from their lists, when he was persecuted for refusing

* It is fair here to note that there was the colour at least of a law for Carnot's exclusion; because the Directory had passed a decree, or forced it upon the legislature truncated by the act of violence just committed,—and that decree declared all the persons proscribed to have forfeited their civil rights. Nevertheless, to regard such a mockery of law as binding on the Institute was unpardonable; and, at any rate, no human power could have obliged that body to fill up the vacancy, which it did by an unanimous and an immediate vote. In 1814 an attempt was made once more to exclude Carnot at the Restoration. M. Arago, then a very young man (only 26 years old), and by much the youngest member of the Institute, declared that he should resist by every means in his power the filling up such a vacancy, and thus prevented the Crown from insisting upon Carnot's exclusion. When this was, during the *cent jours*, told to Napoleon by the General himself, he was much struck with it, expressed himself in terms of great admiration, probably reflected somewhat painfully upon his own very different conduct in consenting to be the successor of his patron 17 years before; but had the magnanimity nevertheless to bestow upon M. Arago the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour.—The excellent and learned Niebuhr has recorded his admiration of Carnot in striking language:—"He is in some points the greatest man of this century. His virtue is of an exalted kind. When he invents a new system of tactics, hastens to the army, teaches it how to conquer by means of them, and then returns to his government at Paris, he appears great indeed! While engaged in making plans for the operations of five armies, he wrote a mathematical work of the light character, and composed very agreeable little poems. He was a mighty genius! However I may differ from his political views, there is a republican greatness in him which commands respect. My love for him may be an anomaly; yet so it is. Had I nothing left in the wide world but a crust of bread, I would be proud of sharing it with Carnot."

to violate the constitution, and with one voice elected Buonaparte in his stead.

The Restoration, which was only consummated in 1815 after the second occupation of Paris, drove this illustrious statesman and warrior a second time, and for the rest of his days, into exile—an exile far more honourable than any Court favour, because it might have been averted by the suppleness, and the time-serving so dear to Princes, the abandonment of long-cherished principles, the sacrifice of deep-rooted opinions; those compliances, and that apostacy, which are more soothing to the Royal taste, in proportion as they more tarnish the character, and are never so much relished as when the name is the most famous which they dishonour. Yet let it never be forgotten that Princes are nurtured in falsehood by the atmosphere of lies which envelops their palace; steeled against natural sympathies by the selfish natures of all that surround them; hardened in cruelty, partly indeed by the fears incident to their position, *but partly* too by the unfeeling creatures, the factitious, the unnatural productions of a Court, whom alone they deal with; trained for tyrants by the prostration which they find in all the minds they come in contact with; encouraged to domineer by the unresisting medium through which all their steps to power and its abuse are made. It is not more true that the vulture is hatched by the parent bird from her egg in her blood-stained nest, than that the parasite Courtier in the palace is the legitimate father of the tyrant.

Let not the page that records such deeds, such virtues, and such sacrifices as Carnot's, and places in contrast with them the perfidy and the ingratitude which rewarded them, be read *only as the* amusement of a vacant hour, or to gratify the vulgar curiosity raised by a celebrated name. That page is fitted to convey a great moral lesson both to the potentates who vex mankind, and to the world whose weakness and whose baseness both pervert their nature to mischief, and arm it with the power of doing harm. While the tyrant is justly loathed—while rational men shall never cease to repeat the descriptive words, "non ullum monstrum nec fœdius, nec tetrius, neque dis hominibusque invisius terra genuit; qui quamquam formâ hominis, tamen immanitate morum vastissimas vincit belluas"—while no excuse nor any palliation for his crimes can ever be admitted from any consideration of other men's follies or vices—yet it is at the same time just, and it is also useful, to bear perpetually in mind how impracticable would be all the schemes of despots, if the people were not the willing accomplices in their own subjection. Well indeed might Napoleon hope to subjugate France on his return, more easily than he ever hoped to conquer Egypt, when he observed that, before he fared forth upon his adventurous expedition to the East, the greatest men whom science enrolled

among her votaries were capable of the baseness which expelled from their Academy one of its most brilliant members, only because to a scientific renown equal with their own he added the imperishable glory of being a martyr to the cause of law and justice! Well might the victorious soldier regard France as a country fated to be ruled with an iron rod, when he saw the whole people quail before three corrupt tyrants, and drive from their soil the illustrious patriot whose genius and whose valour had twice saved it from foreign conquest! Well might the Bourbons, whom Napoleon's mad ambition had replaced on the throne, verify the saying, that the worst of Revolutions is a Restoration, when the French people suffered them without a murmur to proscribe the author of all those victories which had made them famous throughout the world, leaving to die, in poverty and in exile, him whose genius had carried their banners triumphant over all Europe, and whose incorruptible integrity had suffered him to retire penniless from the uncontrolled distribution of millions! It was thus that Marlborough was driven for a season into banishment by the factious violence of the times acting upon a thoughtless and ungrateful people.* It is thus that the coarse abuse of Wellington is, in our day, the favourite topic with millions of his countrymen, under the absolute domination of those priests and demagogues whom they suffer to think for them, and whom they follow blindly, without ever exercising any will of their own more than if Providence had not endowed them with reason. But the people of all countries may be well assured that, as long as they become the willing instruments, the effective accomplices† of Royal crimes, or

* It must, in justice to the French nation, be borne in mind, that France was then occupied by the foreign armies; and that the article of the Convention securing a general amnesty for all political offenders was violated in the person of Carnot as well as of Ney, little to the credit of any party concerned, whether actively or passively. Let it be recorded, to the eternal honour of the Prussian Government, that at Magdeburgh, where the illustrious exile passed his latter days, the soldiers had orders to salute him as often as he appeared in the streets. It is a similar homage to science and letters—to its own natural enemy, the Press—that the Prussian despotism pays in making its soldiers salute the statue of Guttemburg, in the towns of Westphalia.

† A truly disgusting anecdote is recorded in the memoirs of Lafayette published by his family. The Emperor Alexander positively assured the venerable republican that he had done all he could to prevent the extreme counter-revolutionary aspect of the arrangement at the Restoration, and, among other things, to make the King give up his favourite date of the reign from 1793, but that the servility of the Corps Legislatif, who came with addresses of absolute submission, silenced him. The Emperor spoke with as much scorn of their baseness as he did of the incorrigible obstinacy of the Bourbons, whom he declared, with the exception of the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe), as "incorrigés, et incorrigibles." These vile deputies doubtless had thought to gain the Emperor's favour as much as Louis XVIII. did. It should be a warning to courtiers and apostates from the cause of the people, when

of sordid and unprincipled incendiaries, by remaining the passive spectators of such guilt, they never will be without the curse of despots—at one time crouching beneath the infliction of some hereditary scourge—at another betrayed by some more splendid military usurper—or both betrayed, and sold, and enthralled by a succession of vulgar tyrants.*

LAFAYETTE.

GREATLY inferior in capacity to Carnot, but of integrity as firm, tempered by milder affections, and of as entire devotion to the principles of liberty, was the eminent and amiable person whose name heads this page; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that the predominating gentleness of his nature supplying the want of more hardy qualities, afforded him the power of resisting those with whom he was co-operating, when they left the right path and sullied the republican banner by their excesses,—a power in which the more stern frame of Carnot's mind was found deficient. For it was the great and the rare praise of Lafayette—a praise hardly shared by him with any other revolutionary chief,—that he both bore a forward part in the scenes of two Revolutions, and refused steadily to move one step farther in either than his principles justified, or his conscientious opinion of the public good allowed.

In another particular he presents a singular and a romantic example of devotion to the cause of liberty when his own country was not concerned, and his station, his interests, nay, his personal safety, were strongly opposed to the sacrifice. A young nobleman, nearly connected with the highest families in Europe, fitted by his rank and by his personal qualities to be the ornament of the greatest court in the world, was seen to quit the splendid and luxurious circle in which he had just begun to shine, and, smit with an uncontrollable enthusiasm for American freedom, to run the gauntlet of the police and the Bastille of France and the cruisers of England, that he might reach the Transatlantic shores, and share the victories of the popular chiefs, or mingle his blood with theirs. His escape to the theatre of glory was as difficult as if he had been flying from the scene of

they see how little Princes respect or thank them for the meanest compliances. (Mem. vol. v. p. 311.)

* The reader of this account of General Carnot will recognise the service rendered to the author by M. Arago's admirable Eloge of that great man when it shall be published. He has been favoured with the perusal of it by the kindness of his much-esteemed colleague.

crimes. He withdrew in secret, travelled under a feigned name, hid himself under various disguises, hired a foreign vessel, escaped with extreme difficulty from the custom-house scrutiny, more than once narrowly missed capture on his passage, and was a proscribed man in his own country, until the chances of politics and of war threw its councils into the same course which he had thus individually anticipated.

The generous zeal which carried him into the New World was not his only recommendation to the affection and gratitude of its inhabitants. His gallantry in the field could only be exceeded by the uniform mildness and modesty of his whole demeanour. Ever ready to serve wherever he could be of most use; utterly regardless of the station in which he rendered his assistance, whether called to convey an order as an aid-de-camp, or to encourage the flagging valour of the troops by his chivalrous example, or to lead a force through multiplied difficulties, or even to signalise himself by the hardiest feat in the art of war,—commanding a retreat; never obtruding his counsels or his claims, but frankly tendering his opinion and seconding the pretensions of others rather than his own, with the weight of his merits and his name—he endeared himself to an army jealous of foreigners, by whom they had been much deceived, to a people remarkable for other qualities than delicacy of sentiment or quickness to acknowledge services rendered, and to a Chief whose great nature, if it had a defect, was somewhat saturnine, and little apt to bestow confidence, especially where disparity of years, as well as military rank, seemed almost to prescribe a more distant demeanour. The entire favour of this illustrious man, which he naturally prized above all other possessions and gloried in above all other honours, he repaid by a devotion which increased his claims to it. When, in the jealousy of party, attempts were made to undermine the General's power, and those who would have sacrificed their country to gratify their personal spleen or envy were seeking to detach the young Frenchman from his leader, by the offer of a command separate and independent of Washington, he at once refused to hold it, and declared that he would rather be the aid-de-camp of the General than accept any station which could give him umbrage for an instant.

In order to perceive the extent of the affection which Lafayette had inspired into the American people, we must transport ourselves from the earliest to the latest scenes of his life, and contemplate certainly the most touching spectacle of national feelings, and the most honourable to both parties, which is anywhere to be seen in the varied page of history. Half a century after the cause of Independence had first carried him across the Atlantic, the soldier of liberty in many climes, the martyr to principles that had made him more familiar with the dungeon than with the palace of which

he was born an inmate, now grown grey in the service of mankind, once more crossed the sea to revisit the scenes of his earlier battles, the objects of his youthful ardour, the remains of his ancient friendships. In a country torn with a thousand factions, the voice of party was instantaneously hushed. From twelve millions of people the accents of joy and gratulation at once burst forth, repeated through the countless cities that stud their vast territory, echoed through their unbounded savannahs and eternal forests. It was the gratitude of the whole nation, graven on their hearts in characters that could not be effaced, transmitted with their blood from parent to child, and seeking a vent, impetuous and uncontrolled, wherever its object, the general benefactor and friend, appeared. Nothing but the miracle which should have restored Washington from the grave could have drawn forth such a rapturous and such an universal expression of respect, esteem, and affection, as the reappearance amongst them of his favourite companion in arms, whose earliest years had been generously devoted to their service. The delicacy of their whole proceedings was as remarkable as the unanimity and the ardour which the people displayed. There was neither the doubtful vulgarity of natural coarseness, nor the unquestionable vulgarity of selfish affectation, to offend the most fastidious taste. All was rational and refined. The constituted authorities answered to the people's voice —the Legislature itself received the nation's guest in the bosom of the people's representatives, to which he could not by law have access—he was hailed and thanked as the benefactor and ally of the New World—and her gratitude was testified in munificent grants of a portion of the territory which he had helped to save. *If there* be those who can compare this grand manifestation of national feeling, entertained upon reasonable grounds and worthy of rational men, with the exhibitions of loyalty which have occasionally been made in England, and not feel somewhat humiliated by the contrast, they must, indeed, have strange notions of what becomes a manly and reflecting people.

The part which Lafayette bore in the Revolutions of his own country was of far greater importance; and as it was played in circumstances of incomparably greater difficulty, so it will unavoidably give rise to a much greater diversity of opinion among those who judge upon its merits. In America, the only qualities required for gaining him the love and confidence of the people whom he had come to serve, were the gallantry of a chivalrous young man, the ingenuous nature of his frankness and his age, and his modest observance of their great chief. To these he added more than a fair share of talents for military affairs, and never committed a single error, either of judgment or temper, that could ruffle the current of public opinion which set so strongly in towards him, from the ad-

miration of his generous enthusiasm for the independent cause. Above all, no crisis ever arose in American affairs which could make the choice of his course a matter of the least doubt. Washington was his polar star, and to steer by that steady light was to pursue the path of the purest virtue, the most consummate wisdom. In France, the scene was widely different. Far from having a single point in controversy, like the champions of separation in the New World, the revolutionists of the Old had let loose the whole questions involved in the structure of the social system. Instead of one great tie being torn asunder, that which knit the colony to the parent State, while all other parts of the system were left untouched and unquestioned, in France the whole foundations of government, nay, of society itself, were laid bare, every stone that lay on another shaken, and all the superstructure taken to pieces, that it might be built up anew, on a different plan, if not on a different basis. To do this mighty work, the nation, far from having one leader of prominent authority, split itself into numberless factions, each claiming the preponderancy, and even in every faction there seemed almost as many leaders as partizans. A whole people had broke loose from all restraint; and while the difficulty and embarrassment of these mighty intestine commotions would have been above the reach of any wisdom and the control of any firmness, had they raged alone, it was incalculably aggravated and complicated by the menacing attitude which all Europe assumed towards the new order of things, portending a war from the beginning, and very soon issuing into actual and formidable hostilities. Such was the scene into which Lafayette found himself flung, with the feeble aid of his American experience, about as likely to qualify him for successfully performing his part in it, as the experience of a village schoolmaster or a small land-steward may be fitted to accomplish the ruler of a kingdom. This diversity, however, he was far from perceiving, and it is even doubtful if to the last he had discovered it. Hence his views were often narrow and contracted to an amazing degree: he could not comprehend how things which had succeeded in the councils of America should fail with the mob of Paris. He seems never to have been aware of the dangers of violence which are as inseparably connected with all revolution as heat is with fire or motion with explosion. His calculations were made on a system which took no account of the agents which were to work it. His mechanism was formed on a theory that left out all consideration of the materials it was composed of—far more of their friction or of the air's resistance; and when it stuck fast on the first movement, or broke to pieces on the least stroke, he stood aghast, as if the laws of nature had been suspended, when it was only that the artist had never taken the trouble of consulting them. These remarks are peculiarly applicable to his

conduct at the two first crises, one of which loosened his connexion with the Revolution, and the other broke it off,—the violent measures of the 20th of June, 1792, when he seems, for the first time, to have conceived it possible that a constitution, six months old, should be violated by the multitudes who had made it in a few weeks—and the events of the famous 10th of August, which astonished him, but no one else, with the spectacle of a monarchy stripped of all substantive strength, overthrown by the tempest in a soil where it had no root, and giving place to a republic, the natural produce of the season and the ground.

Enamoured with that liberty for which he had fought and bled in America, no sooner did the troubles break out in France than Lafayette at once plunged into the revolutionary party, and declared himself for the change. The violences that attended the 14th of July, he seemed to have laid upon the resistance made by the court; and was nothing scared even by the subsequent proceedings, which, though accompanied by no violence, yet inevitably led to the scenes of tumult that ensued. His error—nor is he the only deluded politician, nor his the only times rank with such delusions—his error, his grievous error, was to take no alarm at any measures that could be propounded, so they were adopted in present peace, and to regard all proceedings as harmless which were clothed with the forms of law. The cloud in the horizon he saw not, because it was of the size of a man's hand; but, indeed, he looked not out for it, because it was afar off: so when the tempest roared he was unprepared, and said, "I bargained not for this." To no one more fitly than to him could be administered the rebuke, "Les révolutions ne se font pas à l'eau de rose;" for their necessary connexion with blood seems never to have struck him. Of Mr. Burke's wiser views he entertained a supreme contempt; and it is a truly marvellous thing that the Commander-in-chief of the National Guard, forty thousand strong—held together by no martial law—restrained by no pay—deliberating habitually with arms in their hands—acting one part at clubs or in the streets in the evening when dismissed from parade, and another when called out—should never have dreamt of the contagious nature of tumultuary feelings and anarchical principles; and even after he had been compelled to resign the command on account of disorders committed by them, and could only be prevailed upon to resume it by their swearing to abstain for the future from such excesses, should have expected such an anomalous force to continue tractable as peace officers, and to maintain the rigorous discipline of practised troops, untainted by the surrounding licence of all classes. There certainly must be admitted to have been more than the share of simplicity (*bonhommie*) with which men who had gone through a revolution on both sides of the Atlantic might be supposed endowed, in

a person of mature age, as well as large experience, being altogether confounded at the 20th of June and 10th of August, and abjuring all connexion with a scheme of change which was found capable of producing disorder.

It is one thing to partake of the atrocities which so revolted him, or even to defend them; it is another to be so scared with events very far from being unforeseen, further still from being out of the course of things in time of change, as to abjure the cause which those atrocities deformed foully, obstructed greatly, but could not alter in its essence and nature. It assuredly behoves all men to meditate deeply before they embark in a course which almost inevitably leads to the committing of popular excesses, and which may by no remote probability be attended with the perpetration of the most flagrant crimes, since it may become their duty not to leave the cause which they have espoused, merely because it has been tarnished by much of which they honestly disapprove. Although Lafayette never for a moment joined the enemy; although, even at the last moment of his command upon the frontier, and when he was placing himself in open hostility to the Government of Paris, he continued to take all possible precautions against a surprise by the Austrian army; and although after his flight from France he rather endured a long and cruel captivity at the constant hazard of his life than lend even the countenance of a single phrase to the cause of the despots leagued against the liberties of his country; yet must it be confessed, that his quitting the troops under his orders exposed, and of necessity exposed, the French territory to the most imminent perils, and that his quitting France was a severe blow both to the cause of the Republic and to the national security. True, his devotion was to that cause, and his desertion was in abhorrence of the outrages committed in its name by wicked men. But then it is equally true that he had been placed in his position by his own free consent, not drawn into it with his eyes shut, and that this position made it quite impossible to oppose the wrongs done by pretended republicans and to fly from the scene of offences, without also damaging the cause of republican government and shaking the very existence of France as an independent state.

But if Lafayette's mistake was great, through the whole of the critical times in which he acted so eminent a part, his integrity was unimpeached, his reputation unsullied, his consistency unbroken. Having laid down to himself the rule, so safe for virtue, but which would keep good men at a distance from all revolutionary movements—never to hold any fellowship with crime, even for the salvation of the country—never to do, or to suffer, or so much as to witness, evil that good may come, even the supreme good of the public safety—by that rule he uniformly held from the taking of the

Bastille down to the excesses of June, 1792, and from thence till he quitted in August the soil tarnished with the overthrow of the Law and the Constitution. To the Court, when it would encroach upon the rights of the nation—to the people, when they would infringe the prerogative of the Crown—he alike presented a manful and uncompromising resistance. The delusion of the Royal Family prevented them from perceiving his inflexible honesty, and they alone doubted his title to their entire confidence. Blinded by groundless expectations that he would take part against the Revolution; judging his honesty by their own, and fancying his zeal for liberty was affected; flattering themselves, in utter oblivion of his whole previous history, that he was an aristocrat, a royalist, nay an absolutist at heart, and that the patrician volunteer for American freedom would stand by his order when the crisis arrived, their disappointment at finding him more honest than they had believed was truly princely; for nothing is more implacable than a sovereign when he *finds his* calculations of human baseness frustrated by virtue *being unexpectedly* found where it was little expected. The ingratitude of the Court was in the proportion of this disappointment. All the great citizen's services to the Royal Family, whose lives he repeatedly had saved at the risk of his own popularity, if not of his personal safety, were forgotten. His resigning the command of sixty battalions of National Guards, because a handful of them had joined in insulting the King, went for nothing. While the corrupt Danton, who had sold himself and given his receipt for the price, was trusted; while the utmost grief was shown at the death of the venal Mirabeau, *because he too* had been bought; the King and Queen, in their letters to the Count d'Artois, then an emigrant at Coblentz, described Lafayette as a "scélérat et fanatique," whom no one could confide in, simply because no one could bribe him from his duty; and the wise Count expressed his lively satisfaction at finding the reports groundless of his relatives reposing any trust in one over whom "avarice gave no hold, as in Mirabeau's case; one who was a mere madman and enthusiast." Even when Lafayette hurried to Paris from his headquarters ont he frontier, in order to repress the outrages of June, 1792, all pointed against the Royal Family, the Queen said, "It was better to perish than owe their safety to Lafayette and the Constitutional party;" and Mr. Windham, with a degree of thoughtlessness only to be explained by the frenzy of his anti-Gallican feelings and his devotion to Mr. Burke, cited the same royal authority as decisive against Lafayette, she having been heard to say, "I will place myself between Barnave and the executioner, but Lafayette I never can forgive." How touching is the admission of this unhappy princess's daughter, the Duchess d'Angoulême, on this subject, and how well does it express the error into which her parents had fallen! "Si ma

mère eût pu vaincre ses préventions contre M. de Lafayette, si on lui eût accordé plus de confiance, mes malheureux parents vivraient encore!" This distrust of the General is thus laid, and on the highest authority, on the Queen. But no one can doubt that a principal ground of it in her mind was the conviction that he never would lend himself to her intrigues—to such faithless proceedings as that which was the main cause of Louis's fate and her own, the flight to Varennes and the declaration left behind revoking all the promises previously made, and affirming that they had been extorted by force.

For this mistrust it is far more than a recompense that it was confined to the Court of Versailles. Men of all parties join in testifying their absolute belief in Lafayette's inflexible integrity; and men of more than ordinary sagacity and reflection have added that he alone passed unscathed through the revolutionary furnace, alone trod without a fall the slippery path of those changeful scenes.—"La réflection," says Mr. Fox, in a letter on his release, "que vous êtes presque tout seul en droit de faire d'avoir joué un rôle dans ce qui s'est passé en France sans avoir rien à vous reprocher, doit être bien consolante."—"Tenez, mon cher," said Napoleon to him when exceedingly hurt by his consistent refusal to support his arbitrary government, "une belle conduite, c'est la vôtre! Mener les affaires de son pays, et en cas de naufrage n'avoir rien de commun avec ses ennemis, voilà ce qu'il faut."

The inextinguishable hatred of despots is however his best panegyric. No sooner had he quitted his command, and passed into the Prussian territory on his way to a neutral country, than he was seized by the allied army; and, when he refused all offers of joining them against his country, nay, would not open his mouth to give the least information which could aid their schemes of invasion, he and his companions, Latour Maubourg and Bureaux-Pusy, were cast into a noisome dungeon at Wezel, where for three months, rigorously separated from each other, they had each a sentinel day and night in his cell. Thence they were transferred, for a year, to Magdeburgh, and confined in damp holes, of five paces long by three broad. The remaining portion of their five years' confinement was spent in a similar dungeon at Olmutz; and to such a pitch of rigour was the imprisonment carried, that, when his sufferings brought Lafayette apparently to his death-bed, and he desired to see one of his companions in misery, the permission to receive his last sigh was peremptorily refused. After five years of solitary confinement, such as felons who had committed the greatest crimes could alone by law be made to undergo, these patriots, who were not even prisoners of war, who were seized and detained in utter violation of the law of nations, whose only offence was their having devoted themselves to

the cause of freedom, in reforming the institutions of their own country, and having abandoned their coadjutors when these combined outrage with reform, were at length liberated by the influence of the victorious Republic at the courts of the princes whom her arms had subdued. Then there walked forth from the darkness of their noisome dungeons victims of tyranny, grown grey with suffering, not with years, and old before their time, to deplore the loss of so many of the best days of their lives, and to bear about for the residue of their existence the maladies which their maltreatment had engendered. Let such passages as this be borne in mind when men inveigh against the crimes of the people. The summary vengeance that terminates a victim's life is not always more harsh than the infliction of such torments as these; and the cruelty thus for years perpetrated on men, the martyrs of liberty, merely because they would not be sold to their country's enemies, has at least this feature, more hateful than any that marks the excesses of popular fury: *it is* cold-blooded, it is deliberate, and never can plead in *its justification* the uncontrollable force of sudden excitement.

The, perhaps, over-scrupulous nature of Lafayette having led him immediately on his liberation to express his strong disapproval of the *coup d'état* or revolution which expelled Carnot and Barthelemy from the Directory, he remained abroad until the return of Buonaparte from Egypt, and the establishment of the Consulship. True to his principles, he again was found refusing all fellowship with him whom he already perceived to have the propensities and to be compassing the purposes of a despot. He remained in seclusion, living in the bosom of his family, till the fall of the Imperial dynasty, and then, during the first Restoration, with the proceedings of which he was still less satisfied than with the Empire. At length, when the second entry of the allies, after the battle of Waterloo, gave him a voice in public affairs, it was exerted to occasion Napoleon's abdication, with the senseless and extravagant view of proclaiming the King of Rome Emperor, with a Regency, a project which, in the mind of every man endowed with common understanding, meant the second restoration of the Bourbons. This event accordingly instantly followed, and the pedantry of Lafayette must bear much of the blame due to that event, and the final expulsion of Napoleon,—a measure which he would be a bold man who should now defend as the best that could be adopted in the circumstances.

In 1830 we once more find him commanding the National Guards, and commanding too the respect and esteem of all his fellow-citizens. His well-known partiality for a republic again displayed itself; but, satisfied that no such thing was now possible in France, he declared himself for a "Monarchy surrounded with Republican Institutions." It is, perhaps, almost as certain a truth as can be well stated in po-

litical science, that to maintain a Monarchy there must be a circumvallation of Monarchical institutions. Nor it is easy to conceive how royalty can exist, unless in mere name, with a military force spread over the country having the choice of its own officers; with a Chamber of Peers possessing no substantive right whatever, nominated by the court and stripped of even moderate wealth; and with such a general concurrence of the people in the choice of their representatives as must exist if those are to represent the country in anything but the title they assume.

That the capacity of Lafayette was far less eminent than his virtues, we have already had frequent opportunity to remark. To eloquence he made no pretensions, but his written compositions are of great merit; clear, plain, sensible, often forcible in the expression of just sentiment and natural feeling, always marked with the sincerity so characteristic of the man. His conversation was unavoidably interesting, after all he had seen and had suffered; but his anecdotes of the American War and French Revolution were given with a peculiar liveliness and grace, set off with a modesty and a candour alike attractive to the listener. He was extremely well informed upon most general subjects; had read history with care and discrimination; had treasured up the lessons of his own experience; was over-scrupulous in his applications of these to practice, somewhat apt to see all things through the medium of American views, generally forgetting the progress that men had made since 1777, and almost always ready to abandon what he was engaged in, if it could not be carried on precisely according to his own conscientious views of what was prudent and right. But in private life he was faultless: kind, warm-hearted, mild, tolerant of all differences civil and religious, venerated in his family, beloved by his friends, and respected even in his manifest errors by all with whom he ever held any intercourse. The appearance of such a personage at any time is of rare occurrence; but of one whose life was spent in courts, in camps, in the turmoil of faction, in the disturbances of civil war, in the extremities of revolutionary violence, it may well be deemed a wonder that such a character should be displayed even for a season, and little short of a miracle that such virtue should walk through such scenes untouched.

PRINCE TALLEYRAND.

Among the eminent men who figured in the eventful history of the French Revolution, there has been more than one occasion for mentioning M. Talleyrand; and whether in that scene, or in any portion of modern annals, we shall in vain look for one who presents a more interesting subject of history. His whole story was marked with strange peculiarities, from the period of infancy to the latest scenes of a life protracted to extreme, but vigorous and undecayed, old age. Born to represent one of the most noble families in France, an accident struck him with incurable lameness; and the cruel habits of their pampered caste made his family add to this infliction the deprivation of his rank as eldest son. He was thus set aside for a brother whose faculties were far more crippled by nature than his own bodily frame had been by mischance; and was condemned to the ecclesiastical state, by way of at once providing for him and getting rid of him. A powerful house, however, could not find in Old France much difficulty in securing promotion in the Church for one of its members, be his disposition towards its duties ever so reluctant, or his capacity for performing them ever so slender. The young Perigord was soon raised over the heads of numberless pious men and profound theologians, and became Bishop of Autun at an age when he had probably had little time for reflection upon his clerical functions, amidst the dissipations of the French capital, into which neither his personal misfortune, nor the domestic deposition occasioned by it, had prevented him from plunging with all the zeal of his strenuous and indomitable nature. His abilities were of the highest order; and the brilliancy with which they soon shone out was well calculated to secure him signal success in Parisian society, where his rank would alone have gained him a high place, but where talents also, even in the humblest station, never failed to rise in the face of the aristocratic "genius of the place," and the habits of a nation of courtiers.

The great event of modern times now converted all Frenchmen into politicians—gave to state affairs the undisturbed monopoly of interest which the pleasures of society had before enjoyed—and armed political talents with the influence which the higher accomplishments of refined taste and elegant manners had hitherto possessed undivided and almost uncontrolled. M. Talleyrand did not long hesitate in choosing his part. He sided with the Revolution party, and continued to act with them; joining those patriotic members of the clerical body who gave up their revenues to the demands of the country, and sacrificed their exclusive privileges to the rights of the commu-

nity. But when the violence of the Republican leaders, disdaining all bounds of prudence, or of justice, or of humanity, threatened to involve the whole country in anarchy and blood, he quitted the scene; and retired first to this country, where he passed a year or two, and then to America, where he remained until the more regular government of the Executive Directory tempered the violence of the Revolution, and restored order to the State. Since that period he always filled the highest stations either at home or in the diplomatic service, except during a part of the Restoration Government, when the incurable folly of those Princes who, as he said himself, had come back from their long exile without having either learnt or forgotten anything, deemed it prudent to lay upon the shelf the ablest and most experienced man in the country, that their councils might have the benefit of being swayed by the Polignacs and other imbecile creatures of their legitimate Court.*

But it is from this constant employment of M. Talleyrand that the principal charge against the integrity of his political character has been drawn. The Chief Minister and Councillor of the Directory, he became suddenly the chief adviser of the Consular Government. When Napoleon took the whole power to himself, he continued his Minister. When the independence of Switzerland was rudely invaded, he still presided over the department of Foreign Affairs. When the child and champion of Jacobinism had laid his parent prostrate in the dust, clothed himself with the Imperial purple, maltreated the Pope, and planted the iron crown of Italy on his brow, the republican ex-bishop remained in his service. When he who afterwards so eloquently avowed, that "General, Consul, Emperor, he owed all to the people," studied to discharge that debt by trampling on every popular right, the advocate of freedom was still to be seen by his side, and holding the pen through which all the Rescripts of despotic power flowed. When the adopted Frenchman, who, with the dying accents of the same powerful and racy eloquence, desired that "his ashes might repose near the stream of the Seine, in the bosom of the people whom he had so much loved," was testifying the warmth of his affection by such tokens as the merciless conscription, and breathing out his tenderness in proclamations of war that wrapped all France and all Europe in flame—the philosophic statesman,—the friend of human improvement,—the philanthropist who had speculated upon the nature of man, and the structure of government in both worlds, and had quitted his original profession because its claims were inimical to the progress of society,—continued inseparably attached to the person of the military ruler, the

* His resignation in 1815-16 was owing to the praiseworthy cause already stated: but the legitimate Bourbons never sought to draw him afterwards from his retirement.

warrior tyrant; and, although he constantly tendered sounder advice than ever was followed, never scrupled to be the executor of Ordinances which he still most disapproved. The term of boundless, unreflecting, and miscalculating ambition was hastened by its excesses; Napoleon was defeated; foreign powers occupied France; and the Emperor's Minister joined them to restore the Bourbons. With them he acted for some time, nor quitted them until they disclosed the self-destructive bent of their feeble and unprincipled minds, —to rule by tools incapable of any acts but those of sycophancy and prostration, and animated by no spirit but that of blind and furious bigotry. The overthrow of the dynasty once more brought M. Talleyrand upon the scene; and he has ever since been the most trusted, as the most valuable and skilful, of all the new Government's advisers; nor have the wisdom and the firmness of any counsels, except indeed those of the Monarch himself, contributed so signally to the successful administration of that great Prince, in the unparalleled difficulties of his truly arduous position.

That these well-known passages in M. Talleyrand's life indicate a disposition to be on the successful side, without any very nice regard to its real merits, can hardly be denied; and when facts, so pregnant with evidence, are before the reader, he has not merely materials for judging of the character to which they relate, but may almost be said to have had its lineaments presented to his view, without the aid of the historian's pencil to pourtray them. But the just discrimination of the historian is still wanting to complete the picture; both by filling up the outline, and by correcting it when *hastily* drawn from imperfect materials. Other passages of the life may be brought forward: explanations may be given of doubtful actions; apparent inconsistencies may be reconciled; and charges, which at first sight seemed correctly gathered from the facts, may be aggravated, extenuated, or repelled, by a more enlarged and a more judicial view of the whole subject. That the inferences fairly deduced from M. Talleyrand's public life can be wholly countervailed by any minuteness of examination, or explained away by any ingenuity of comment, it would be absurd to assert: yet it is only doing justice to comprise in our estimate of his merits some things not usually taken into the account by those who censure his conduct, and who pronounce him—merely upon the view of his having borne part in such opposite systems of policy, and acting with such various combinations of party,—to have been a person singularly void of public principle, and whose individual interest was always his god.

His conduct towards the caste he belonged to has been remarked upon with severity. But to that caste he owed only cruel and heartless oppression, and all for an accident that befell him in the cradle. He was not only disinherited, but he literally never was allowed to

sleep under his father's roof. His demeanour, in respect to sacred matters, unbecoming his profession as a priest, has called down censures of a far graver description. But he was made by force to enter a profession which he abhorred; and upon those who forced him, not upon himself, falls the blame of his conduct having been unsuited to the cloth which they compelled him to wear. It, moreover, is true, but it has been always forgotten in the attacks upon his ecclesiastical character, that he gallantly undertook the defence of his sacred order, at a time when such devotion to a most unpopular body exposed him to destruction; and that he went into exile, leaving his fortune behind and subsisting when abroad upon the sale of his books, rather than be contaminated by any share whatever in the enormities of the first Revolution, is a circumstance equally true and equally kept in the shade by his traducers. When the dissipations of his earlier years are chronicled, no allusion is ever made to the severities of his studies at the Sorbonne, where he was only known as a young man of haughty demeanour and silent habits, who lived buried among his books. Unable to deny his wit, and overcome by the charms of his conversation, envious men have refused him even solid capacity, and the merit of having rendered more important services to society; but they have only been able to make this denial by forgetting the profound discourse upon Lotteries which laid the foundation of his fame; and the works upon Public Education, upon Weights and Measures, and upon Colonial Policy, which raised the superstructure. No mitigation of the judgment pronounced on his accommodating, or what has perhaps justly been called his time-serving, propensities, has ever been effected by viewing the courage which he showed in opposing Napoleon's Spanish war; the still more dangerous energy with which he defended the clerical body in his diocese at a time full of every kind of peril to political integrity; and his exclusion from power by the restored dynasty, whose return to the French throne was mainly the work of his hands, but whose service he quitted rather than concur in a policy humiliating to his country. Nor has any account been taken of the difficult state of affairs, and the imminent risk of hopeless anarchy on the one hand, or complete conquest on the other, to which France was exposed by the fortune of war, and the hazards of revolution;—an alternative presented to him in more than one of those most critical emergencies in which he was called to decide for his country as well as himself. Yet all these circumstances must be weighed together with the mere facts of his successive adhesion to so many governments, if we would avoid doing his memory the grossest injustice, and escape the most manifest error in that fair estimate of his political virtue which it should be our object to form.

But if the integrity of this famous personage be the subject of un-

avoidable controversy, and if our opinion regarding it must of necessity be clouded with some doubt, and at best be difficult satisfactorily to fix—upon the talents with which he was gifted, and his successful cultivation of them, there can be no question at all; and our view of them is unclouded and clear. His capacity was most vigorous and enlarged. Few men have ever been endowed with a stronger natural understanding; or have given it a more diligent culture, with a view to the pursuits in which he was to employ it. His singular acuteness could at once penetrate every subject; his clearness of perception at a glance unravelled all complications, and presented each matter distinct and unencumbered; his sound, plain, manly sense, at a blow got rid of all the husk, and pierced immediately to the kernel. A cloud of words was wholly thrown away upon him; he cared nothing for all the declamation in the world; ingenious topics, fine comparisons, cases in point, epigrammatic sentences, all passed innocuous over his head. So the storms of passion blew unheeded past one whose temper nothing could ruffle, and whose path towards his object nothing could obstruct. It was a lesson and a study, as well as a marvel, to see him disconcert, with a look of his keen eye, or a motion of his chin, a whole piece of wordy talk, and far-fetched and fine-spun argument, without condescending to utter, in the deep tones of his most powerful voice, so much as a word or an interjection;—far less to overthrow the flimsy structure with an irresistible remark, or consume it with a withering sarcasm. Whoever conversed with him, or saw him in conversation, at once learnt both how dangerous a thing it was to indulge before him in loose prosing, or in false reasoning, or in frothy declamation; and how total an error he would commit who should take the veteran statesman's good-natured smile for an innocent insensibility to the ludicrous, and his apparently passive want of all effort for permanent indolence of mind. There are many living examples of persons not meanly gifted who, in the calm of his placid society, have been wrecked among such shoals as these.

But his political sagacity was above all his other great qualities; and it was derived from the natural perspicacity to which we have adverted, and that consummate knowledge of mankind—that swift and sure tact of character—into which his long and varied experience had matured the faculties of his manly, yet subtle understanding. If never to be deluded by foolish measures, nor ever to be deceived by cunning men, be among the highest perfections of the practical statesman, where shall we look for any one who preferred stronger claims to this character? But his statesmanship was of no vulgar cast. He despised the silly, the easy, and false old maxims which inculcate universal distrust, whether of unknown men or of novel measures, as much as he did the folly of those whose facility is an

advertisement for impostors or for enthusiasts to make dupes of them. His was the skill which knew as well where to give his confidence as to withhold it; and he knew full surely that the whole difficulty of the political art consists in being able to say whether any given person or scheme belongs to the right class or to the wrong. It would be very untrue to affirm that he never wilfully deceived others; but it would probably be still more erroneous to admit that he ever in his life was deceived. So he held in utter scorn the affected wisdom of those who think they prove themselves sound practical men by holding cheap every proposal to which the world has been little or not at all accustomed, and which relies for its support on principles rarely resorted to. His own plan for maintaining the peace and independence of Belgium may be cited as an example of a policy at once refined and profound. He would have had it made the resort of the fine arts and of letters, with only force enough to preserve its domestic peace, and trusting for its protection to the general abhorrence which all Europe must have, in these times, of any proceeding hostile to such a power.

Although M. Talleyrand never cultivated the art of oratory, yet his brilliant wit, enlivening a constant vein of deep sense and original observation, and his extraordinary mastery over all the resources of the language in which he expressed himself, gave to the efforts of his pen, as well as to his conversation, a relish, a charm, and a grace, that few indeed have ever attained, and certainly none have surpassed. His thorough familiarity with the best writers of his own country was manifest in all his compositions, as well as in his talk; which, however, was too completely modulated to the tone of the most refined society, ever to wear the least appearance of pedantry. To cite examples of the felicitous turns of his expression in writing, would be to take almost any passage at random of the few works which he has left. But the following description of the American Planter may suffice to show how he could paint moral as well as natural scenery. The writers of a less severe school might envy its poetical effect, and might perhaps learn how possible it is to be pointed and epigrammatic without being affected, and sentimental without being mawkish.

"Le bûcheron Américain ne s'intéresse à rien; toute idée sensible est loin de lui; ces branches si élégamment jetées par la nature, un beau feuillage, une couleur vive qui anime une partie du bois, un vert plus fort qui en assombrit une autre, tout cela n'est rien: il n'a de souvenir à placer nulle part: c'est la quantité de coups de hache qu'il faut qu'il donne pour abattre un arbre, qui est son unique idée. Il n'a point planté; il n'en sait point les plaisirs. L'arbre qu'il planterait n'est bon à rien pour lui; car jamais il ne le verra assez fort pour qu'il puisse l'abattre: c'est de détruire qui le fait vivre: on détruit partout: aussi tout lieu lui est bon; il ne tient pas au champ où il a placé son travail, parce que son travail n'est que de la fatigue, et qu'aucune idée douce n'y est jointe. Ce qui sort de ses mains ne passe point par

toutes les croissances si attachantes pour le cultivateur ; il ne suit pas la destinée de ses productions ; il ne connaît pas le plaisir des nouveaux essais ; et si en s'en allant il n'oublie pas sa hache, il ne laisse pas de regrets là où il a vécu des années."

Of his truly inimitable conversation, and the mixture of strong masculine sense, and exquisitely witty turns in which it abounded, —independently of the interest, and the solid value which it derived from a rich fund of anecdote, delivered in the smallest number possible of the most happy and most appropriate words possible,— it would indeed be difficult to convey an adequate idea. His own powers of picturesque, and wonderfully condensed expression would be hardly sufficient to present a portrait of its various and striking beauties. Simple and natural, yet abounding in the most sudden and unexpected turns—full of point, yet evidently the inspiration of the moment, and therefore more absolutely to the purpose than if it had been the laboured effort of a day's reflection, a single word often performing the office of sentences, nay, a tone not unfrequently rendering many words superfluous—always the phrase most perfectly suitable selected, and its place most happily chosen—all this is literally correct, and no picture of fancy, but a mere abridgment and transcript of the marvellous original; and yet it all falls very short of conveying its lineaments, and fails still more to render its colouring and its shades. For there was a constant gaiety of manner, which had the mirthful aspect of good humour, even on the eve or on the morrow of some flash in which his witty raillery had wrapt a subject or a person in ridicule, or of some torrent in which his satire had descended instantaneous but destructive—there was an archness of malice, when more than ordinary execution must be done, that defied the pencil of the describer, as it did the attempts of the imitator—there were manners the most perfect in ease, in grace, in flexibility—there was the voice of singular depth and modulation, and the countenance alike fitted to express earnest respect, unostentatious contempt, and bland complacency—and all this must really have been witnessed to be accurately understood. His sayings—his *mots*, as the French have it—are renowned; but these alone convey an imperfect idea of his whole conversation. They show indeed the powers of his wit, and the felicity of his concise diction; and they have a peculiarity of style, such that, if shown without a name, no one could be at a loss to whom he should attribute them. But they are far enough from completing the sketch of his conversation to those who never heard it. A few instances may, however, be given, chiefly to illustrate what has been said of his characteristic conciseness and selection.

Being asked if a certain authoress, whom he had long since known, but who belonged rather to the last age, was not "un peu ennuyeuse," "Du tout;" said he, "elle était *parfaitement* ennuyeuse."—A gentleman in company was one day making a somewhat zealous eulogy

of his mother's beauty, dwelling upon the topic at uncalled-for length —he himself having certainly inherited no portion of that kind under the marriage of his parents. "C'était, donc, monsieur votre père qui apparemment n'était pas trop bien," was the remark, which at once released the circle from the subject.—When Madame de Staël published her celebrated novel of *Delphine*, she was supposed to have painted herself in the person of the heroine, and M. Talleyrand in that of an elderly lady, who is one of the principal characters. "On me dit (said he, the first time he met her) que nous sommes tous les deux dans votre roman, déguisés en femme."—Rulhieres, the celebrated author of the work on the Polish Revolution, having said, "Je n'ai fait qu'une mechanceté de ma vie;" "Et quand finira-t-elle?" was M. Talleyrand's reply.—"Genève est ennuyeuse, n'est-ce pas?" asked a friend; "Surtout quand on s'y amuse," was the answer.—"Elle est insupportable," (said he, with marked emphasis, of one well known; but as if he had gone too far, and to take off something of what he had laid on, he added) "Elle n'a que ce défaut-là."—"Ah, je sens les tourments d'enfer," said a person whose life had been supposed to be somewhat of the loosest. "Déjà?"* was the inquiry suggested to M. Talleyrand.—Nor ought we to pass over the only *mot* that ever will be recorded of Charles X., uttered on his return to France in 1814, on seeing, like our second Charles at a similar reception, that the adversaries of his family had disappeared, "Il n'y a qu'un Français de plus." This was the suggestion of M. Talleyrand. He afterwards proposed, in like manner, to Charles's successor, that the foolish freaks of the Duchesse de Berri should be visited with this Rescript to her and her faction—"Madame, il n'y a plus d'espoir pour vous. Vous serez jugée, condamnée, et graciée."

Of his temper and disposition in domestic life, it remains to speak; and nothing could be more perfect than these. If it be true, which is, however, more than questionable, that a life of public business hardens the heart; if this be far more certainly the tendency of a life much chequered with various fortune; if he is almost certain to lose his natural sympathies with mankind, who has in his earliest years tasted the bitter cup of cruel and unnatural treatment, commended to his lips by the hands that should have cherished him; if, above all, a youth of fashionable dissipation and intrigue, such as M. Talleyrand, like most of our own great men, undeniably led, has, in almost every instance, been found to eradicate the softer domestic feelings, and to plant every selfish weed in the cold soil of a neglected bosom—surely it is no small praise of his kindly and ge-

* Certainly it came naturally to him: it is, however, not original. The Cardinal de Retz's physician is said to have made a similar exclamation on a like occasion; —"Déjà, Monseigneur?"

nerous nature, that we are entitled to record how marked an exception he formed to all these rules. While it would be a foolish and a needless exaggeration to represent him as careless of his own interest, or ambition, or gratification, at any period of his life, it is nevertheless quite true that his disposition continued to the last gentle and kindly; that he not only entertained throughout the tempest of the revolutionary anarchy the strongest abhorrence of all violent and cruel deeds, but exerted his utmost influence in mitigating the excesses which led to them in others; that his love of peace in all its blessed departments, whether tranquillity at home, or amity and good-will abroad, was the incessant object of his labours; that, in domestic life, he was of a peculiarly placid temper, and full of warm and steady affections. His aversion to all violent courses was, indeed, in some instances, carried to a length which prevented his wonted calmness of judgment, and his constant and characteristic love of justice even when an adversary was concerned, from having their free scope. He never could speak with patience of Carnot, for having continued, during the Reign of Terror, to serve and to save his country by directing the war which defended her against Europe in arms;—forgetting how much less could be urged for his own conduct under the profligate and tyrannical Directory of 1797 and 1798, under the conscriptions of Napoleon, and under the military occupation of the Allies,—even admitting his predominant desire to prevent anarchy and conquest—than might most fairly be offered in defence of that illustrious Republican's inflexible and uncompromising, though stern and undaunted virtue.

NAPOLEON—WASHINGTON.

After Lafayette had quitted the armies of the Republic, defaced by the crimes of 1792, and Carnot himself, long the director of their marvellous achievements, and standing by his country in spite of all the excesses by which she was disfigured, had at length been driven from her side by the evil men that swayed her destinies, victory, long so familiar to the French people, was for a season estranged from them, and the period of their conquests seemed at last to have arrived. A new and yet more triumphant course was then begun, under the genius of Napoleon Buonaparte, certainly the most extraordinary person who has appeared in modern times, and to whom, in some respects, no parallel can be found, if we search the whole annals of the human race. For though the conquests of Alexander were more extensive, and the matchless character of Cæsar

was embellished by more various accomplishments; and the invaders of Mexico and Peru worked their purposes of subjugation with far more scanty means, yet the military genius of the Great Captain shines with a lustre peculiarly its own, or which he shares with Hannibal alone, when we reflect that he never had to contend, like those conquerors, with adversaries inferior to himself in civilization or discipline, but won all his triumphs over hosts as well ordered and regularly marshalled and amply provided as his own.

This celebrated man was sprung from a good family in Corsica, and while yet a boy fixed the attention and raised the hopes of all his connexions. In his early youth his military genius shone forth; he soon gained the summit of his profession; he commanded at twenty-five a military operation of a complicated and difficult nature in Paris: being selected for superior command by the genius of Carnot, he rapidly led the French armies through a series of victories till then unexampled, and to which, even now, his own after achievements can alone afford any parallel, for the suddenness, the vehemence, and the completeness of the operations. That much of his success was derived from the mechanical adherence of his adversaries to the formal rules of ancient tactics cannot be doubted; and our Wellington's campaigns would, in the same circumstances, and had he been opposed to similar antagonists, in all likelihood have been as brilliant and decisive. But he always had to combat the soldiers bred in Napoleon's school; while Napoleon, for the most part, was matched against men whose inveterate propensity to follow the rules of an obsolete science, not even the example of Frederic had been able to subdue; and who were resolved upon being a second time the victims of the same obstinate blindness which had, in Frederic's days, made genius triumph over numbers by breaking through rules repugnant to common sense. It must, however, be confessed, that, although this consideration accounts for the achievements of this great warrior, which else had been impossible, nothing is thus detracted from his praise, excepting that what he accomplished ceases to appear miraculous: for it was his glory never to let an error pass unprofitably to himself; nor ever to give his adversary an advantage which he could not ravish from him, with ample interest, before it was turned to any fatal account.

Nor can it be denied that, when the fortune of war proved adverse, the resources of his mind were only drawn forth in the more ample profusion. After the battle of Asperne he displayed more skill, as well as constancy, than in all his previous campaigns; and the struggle which he made in France, during the dreadful conflict that preceded his downfall, is by many regarded as the masterpiece of his military life. Nor let us forget that the grand error of his whole

career, the mighty expedition to Moscow, was a political error only. The vast preparations for that campaign—the combinations by which he collected and marshalled and moved this prodigious and various force like a single corps, or a domestic animal, or a lifeless instrument in his hand—displayed, in the highest degree, the great genius for arrangement and for action with which he was endowed; and his prodigious efforts to regain the ground which the disasters of that campaign rescued from his grasp, were only not successful, because no human power could in a month create an army of cavalry, nor a word of command give recruits the discipline of veterans. In the history of war, it is, assuredly, only Hannibal who can be compared with him; and certainly, when we reflect upon the yet greater difficulties of the Carthaginian's position—the much longer time during which he maintained the unequal contest—still more, when we consider that his enemies have alone recorded his story, while Napoleon has been his own annalist—justice seems to require that the modern should yield to the ancient commander.

The mighty operation which led to his downfall, and in which all the resources of his vast capacity as well as all the recklessness of his boundless ambition were displayed, has long fixed, as it well might, the regards of mankind, and it has not been too anxiously contemplated. His course of victory had been for twelve years uninterrupted. The resources of France had been poured out without stint at his command. The destruction of her liberties had not relaxed the martial propensities of her people, nor thinned the multitudes that poured out their blood under his banners. The fervour of the revolutionary zeal had cooled, but the discipline which a vigorous despotism secures had succeeded, and the Conscription worked as great miracles as the Republic. The countless hosts which France thus poured forth, were led by this consummate warrior over Italy, Spain, Germany; half the ancient thrones of Europe were subverted, the capitals of half her powers occupied in succession; and a monarchy was established which the existence of England and of Russia alone prevented from being universal.

But the vaulting ambition of the great conqueror at last overshot itself. After his most arduous and perhaps most triumphant campaign, undertaken with a profusion of military resources unexampled in the annals of war, the ancient capital of the Russian empire was in his hands; yet, from the refusal of the enemy to make peace, and the sterility of the vast surrounding country, the conquest was bootless to his purpose. He had collected the mightiest army that ever the world saw; from all parts of the Continent he had gathered his forces; every diversity of blood, and complexion, and tongue, and garb, and weapon, shone along his line;—"Exercitus mixtus ex

colluvione omnium gentium, quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, alia vestis, alia arma, alii ritûs, alia sacra *" —The resources of whole provinces moved through the kingdoms which his arms held in awe; the artillery of whole citadels traversed the fields; the cattle on a thousand hills were made the food of the myriads whom he poured into the plains of Eastern Europe, where blood flowed in rivers, and the earth was whitened with men's bones: but this gigantic enterprise, uniformly successful, was found to have no object, when it had no longer an enemy to overcome, and the victor in vain sued to the vanquished for peace. The conflagration of Moscow in one night began his discomfiture, which the frost of another night completed! Upon the pomp and circumstance of unnumbered warriors—their cavalry, their guns, their magazines, their equipage—descended slowly, flake by flake, the snow of a northern night;—" Tantaque vis frigoris insecuta est, ut ex illâ miserabili hominum jumentorumque strage quum se quisque attollere ac levare vellet, diu nequiret, quia, torpentibûs rigore nervis, vix flectere artus poterant."† The hopes of Napoleon were blighted; the retreat of his armament cut off; and his doom sealed far more irreversibly than if the conqueror of a hundred fields had been overthrown in battle, and made captive with half his force. All his subsequent efforts to regain the power he had lost never succeeded in countervailing the effects of that Russian night. The fire of his genius burnt, if possible, brighter than ever; in two campaigns his efforts were more than human, his resources more miraculous than before, his valour more worthy of the prize he played for—but all was vain; his weapon was no longer in his hand; his army was gone; and his adversaries, no more quailing under the feeling of his superior nature, had discovered him to be vincible like themselves, and grew bold in their turn, as the Mexicans gathered courage, three centuries ago, from finding that the Spaniards were subject to the accidents of mortality.

Such was this great captain, and such was the fate on which the conqueror rushed.

It is quite certain that the mighty genius of Napoleon was of the highest order; he was one of the greatest masters of the art of war; he is to be ranked among the generals of the highest class, if indeed there be any but Hannibal who can be placed on a level with him. To all the qualities, both in the council and in the field, which combine to form an accomplished commander, he added, what but few indeed have ever shown, an original genius: he was so great an improver on the inventions of others, that he might well lay claim to the honours of discovery. The tactics of Frederic he carried so much

* Liv. xxviii. 12. † Liv. xxi. 58.

farther, and with such important additions, that we might as well deny to Watt the originating of the steam-engine, as to Napoleon the being an inventor in military science. The great step which Frederic made was the connecting together all the operations of an extensive campaign in various quarters, and especially the moving vast bodies of troops rapidly on a given point, so as to fight his adversaries there at a certain advantage. This required a brave neglect of the established rules of tactics; it required a firm determination to despise formidable obstacles; it required an erasure of the words "difficult and impossible" from the general's vocabulary. In proportion to all the hardihood of these operations, was the high merit of their author, and also the certainty of their success against the regular mechanical generals of Maria Theresa, to whom he was opposed. So much the rather are we to wonder at the successors of those generals, the produce of the same Germanic school, showing themselves as unprepared for the great extension of the Prussian system, but in the same direction, which Napoleon practised, and being as completely taken unawares by his rapid movements at Ulm, and his feints at Wagram, as their masters had been at Rosbach, at Pirna, and at Prague.

The degree in which he thus extended and improved upon Frederic's tactics was great indeed. No man ever could bring such bodies into the field; none provide by combined operations for their support; none move such masses from various quarters upon one point; none manœuvre at one fight the thousands whom he had assembled, change his operations as the fate of the hour or the moment required, and tell with such absolute certainty the effects of each movement. He had all the knowledge in minute detail which the art of war requires; he had a perfectly accurate appreciation of what men and horses and guns can do; his memory told him, and in an instant, where each corps, each regiment, each gun was situated both in peace and war, and in what condition almost each company of his vast force was at any moment. Then he possessed the intuitive knowledge of his enemy's state, and movements, and plans; so nicely could he unravel all conflicting accounts, and decide at once as by intuition which was true. In the field his eye for positions, distances, elevations, numbers, was quick, and it was infallible. All his generals at all times submitted their judgment to his and without the least reluctance or hesitation, not deferring to his authority, but yielding from an absolute conviction of his superior skill; nor ever doubting, because firmly assured he was in the right. His own self-confidence was in the same proportion, and it was unerring.

Lying under some cover in fire, he would remain for an hour or two, receiving reports and issuing his orders, sometimes with a plan before him, sometimes with the face of the ground in his mind only.

There he is with his watch in one hand, while the other moves constantly from his pocket, where his snuff-box or rather his snuff lies. —An aid-de-camp arrives, tells of a movement, answers shortly some questions rapidly, perhaps impatiently, put, is dispatched with the order that is to solve the difficulty of some general of division. Another is ordered to attend, and sent off with directions to make some distant corps support an operation. The watch is again consulted; more impatient symptoms; the name of one aid-de-camp is constantly pronounced; question after question is put whether any one is coming from a certain quarter; an event is expected; it ought to have happened; at length the wished-for messenger arrives.—"Eh bien! Qu'a-t-on fait là-bas?" "La hauteur est gagnée; le maréchal est là." "Qu'il tienne ferme—pas un pas de mouvement." Another aid-de-camp is ordered to bring up the Guard. "Que le maréchal avance vers la tour en défilant par sa gauche—et tout ce qui se trouve à sa droite est prisonnier."—Now the watch is consulted and the snuff is taken no more; the battle is over; the fortune of the day is decided; the great Captain indulges in pleasantry; nor doubts any more of the certainty and of the extent of his victory than if he had already seen its details in the bulletin.

After all, the grand secret of both Frederic's and Napoleon's successes, the movement of the masses which were to place their enemy in a disadvantageous position, appears to be, like all great improvements, sufficiently obvious; for it is founded on the very natural principle on which the modern Naval plan of Breaking the Line proceeds. If either at sea or on shore one party can place his enemy between two fires, or on any material part of his battle bring double the force to bear upon the defenders of that point, the success of the operation is certain. In order to execute such a plan on shore, a prodigious combination of military resources is required, and they only who are so amply furnished can venture to attempt it. That Napoleon had this capacity beyond other men is altogether incontestable.

But his genius was not confined to war: he possessed a large capacity also for civil affairs. He saw as clearly, and as quickly determined on his course, in government as in the field. His public works, and his political reformations, especially his Code of Laws, are monuments of his wisdom and his vigour, more imperishable, as time has already proved, and as himself proudly foretold, than all his victories. His civil courage was more brilliant than his own, or most other men's, valour in the field. How ordinary a bravery it was that blazed forth at Lodi, when he headed his wavering columns across the bridge swept by the field of Austrian artillery, compared with the undaunted and sublime courage that carried him from Cannes to Paris with a handful of men, and fired his bosom with the desire,

and sustained it with the confidence, of overthrowing a dynasty, and overwhelming an empire, by the terror of his name!

Nor were his endowments merely those of the statesman and the warrior. If he was not, like Cæsar, a consummate orator, he yet knew men so thoroughly, and especially Frenchmen, whom he had most nearly studied, that he possessed the faculty of addressing them in strains of singular eloquence,—an eloquence peculiar to himself. It is not more certain that he is the greatest soldier whom France ever produced, than it is certain that his place is high amongst her greatest writers, as far as composition or diction is concerned. Some of his bulletins are models for the purpose which they were intended to serve; his address to the soldiers of his Old Guard at Fontainebleau is a masterpiece of dignified and pathetic composition; his speech during the Hundred Days, at the Champ de Mars, beginning, "General, Consul, Empereur je tiens tout du peuple," *is to be* placed amongst the most perfect pieces of simple and *majestic eloquence*. These things are not the less true for being seldom or never remarked.

But with these great qualities of the will—the highest courage, the most easy formation of his resolutions, the most steadfast adherence to his purpose, the entire devotion of all his energies to his object—and with the equally shining faculties of the understanding by what that firm will worked—the clearest and quickest apprehension, the power of intense application, the capacity of complete abstraction from all interrupting ideas, the complete and most instantaneous circumspection of all difficulties, whether on *one side*, or even providently seen in prospect, the intuitive knowledge of men, and the power of mind and of tongue to mould their will to his purpose —with these qualities, which form the character held greatest by vulgar minds, the panegyric of Napoleon must close. HE WAS A CONQUEROR;—HE WAS A TYRANT. To gratify his ambition—to slake his thirst of power—to weary a lust of dominion which no conquest could satiate—he trampled on Liberty when his hand might have raised her to a secure place; and he wrapt the world in flames, which the blood of millions alone could quench. By those passions, a mind not originally unkindly, was perverted and deformed, till human misery ceased to move it, and honesty, and truth, and pity, all sense of the duties we owe to God and to man, had departed from one thus given up to a single and a selfish pursuit. "Tantas animi virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant; inhumana crudelitas;* perfidia

* The kindliness of his nature will be denied by some; the inhuman cruelty by others: but both are correctly true. There is extant a letter which we have seen, full of the tenderest affection towards his favourite brother, to whom it was addressed, when about to be separated from him, long after he had entered on public life. It is in parts blotted with his tears, evidently shed before the ink was dry.

plusquam Punica; nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus Deûm metus, nullum jusjurandum, nulla religio."* The death of Enghien, the cruel sufferings of Wright, the mysterious end of Pichegru, the punishment of Palm, the tortures of Toussaint, † have all been dwelt upon as the spots on his fame; because the fortune of individuals presenting a more definite object to the mind, strike our imaginations, and rouse our feelings more than wretchedness in larger masses, less distinctly perceived. But to the eye of calm reflection, the declaration of an unjustifiable war, or the persisting in it a day longer than is necessary, presents a more grievous object of contemplation, implies a disposition more pernicious to the world, and calls down a reprobation far more severe.

How grateful the relief which the friend of mankind, the lover of virtue, experiences when, turning from the contemplation of such a character, his eye rests upon the greatest man of our own or of any age;—the only one upon whom an epithet so thoughtlessly lavished by men, to foster the crimes of their worst enemies, may be innocently and justly bestowed! In Washington we truly behold a marvellous contrast to almost every one of the endowments and the vices which we have been contemplating; and which are so well fitted to excite a mingled admiration, and sorrow, and abhorrence. With none of that brilliant genius which dazzles ordinary minds; with not even any remarkable quickness of apprehension; with knowledge less than almost all persons in the middle ranks, and many well educated of the humbler classes possess; this eminent person is presented to our observation clothed in attributes as modest, as unpretending, as little calculated to strike or to astonish, as if he had passed unknown through some secluded region of private life. But he had a judgment sure and sound; a steadiness of mind which never suffered any passion, or even any feeling to ruffle its calm; a strength of understanding which worked rather than forced its way through all obstacles,—removing or avoiding rather than overleaping them.

As for his cruelty, they only can deny it who think it more cruel for a man to witness torments which he has ordered, or to commit butchery with his own hand, than to give a command which must consign thousands to agony and death. If Napoleon had been called upon to witness, or with his own hand to inflict such misery, he would have paused at first—because physical repugnance would have prevailed over mental callousness. But how many minutes' reflection would it have taken to deaden the pain, and make him execute his own purpose?

* Liv. xxi.

† It is a gross error to charge him with the poisoning of his sick in Egypt; and his massacre of the prisoners at Jaffa is a very controverted matter. But we fear the early anecdote of his ordering an attack, with no other object than to gratify his mistress, when a young officer of artillery, rests upon undeniable authority; and if so, it is to be placed amongst his worst crimes.

If profound sagacity, unshaken steadiness of purpose, the entire subjugation of all the passions which carry havoc through ordinary minds, and oftentimes lay waste the fairest prospects of greatness,—nay, the discipline of those feelings which are wont to lull or to seduce genius, and to mar and to cloud over the aspect of virtue herself,—joined with, or rather leading to the most absolute self-denial, the most habitual and exclusive devotion to principle,—if these things can constitute a great character, without either quickness of apprehension, or resources of information, or inventive powers, or any brilliant quality that might dazzle the vulgar, then surely Washington was the greatest man that ever lived in this world uninspired by divine wisdom, and unsustained by supernatural virtue.

Nor could the human fancy create a combination of qualities, even to the very wants and defect of the subject, more perfectly fitted for the scenes in which it was his lot to bear the chief part; whether we regard the war which he conducted, the political constitution over which he afterwards presided, or the tempestuous times through which he had finally to guide the bark himself had launched. Averse as his pure mind and temperate disposition naturally was from the atrocities of the French Revolution, he yet never leant against the cause of liberty, but clung to it even when degraded by the excesses of its savage votaries. Towards France, while he reprobated her aggressions upon other states, and bravely resisted her pretensions to control his own, he yet never ceased to feel the gratitude which her aid to the American cause had planted eternally in every American bosom; and for the freedom of a nation which had followed the noble example of his countrymen in breaking the chains of a thousand years, he united with those countrymen in cherishing a natural sympathy and regard. Towards England, whom he had only known as a tyrant, he never, even in the worst times of French turbulence at home, and injury to foreign states, could unbend from the attitude of distrust and defiance into which the conduct of her sovereign and his Parliament, not unsupported by her people, had forced him, and in which the war had left him. Nor was there ever among all the complacent self-delusions with which the fond conceits of national vanity are apt to intoxicate us, one more utterly fantastical than the notion wherewith the politicians of the Pitt school were wont to flatter themselves and beguile their followers—that simply because the Great American would not yield either to the bravadoes of the Republican envoy, or to the fierce democracy of Jefferson, he therefore had become weary of republics, and a friend to monarchy and to England. In truth his devotion to liberty, and his intimate persuasion that it can only be enjoyed under the republican scheme, constantly gained strength to the end of his truly glorious life; and his steady resolu-

tion to hold the balance even between contending extremes at home, as well as to repel any advance from abroad incompatible with perfect independence, was not more dictated by the natural justice of his disposition, and the habitual sobriety of his views, than it sprang from a profound conviction that a commonwealth is most effectually served by the commanding prudence which checks all excesses, and guarantees it against the peril that chiefly besets popular governments.

His courage, whether in battle or in council, was as perfect as might be expected from this pure and steady temper of soul. A perfect just man, with a thoroughly firm resolution never to be misled by others, any more than to be by others overawed; never to be seduced or betrayed, or hurried away by his own weaknesses or self-delusions, any more than by other men's arts; nor ever to be disheartened by the most complicated difficulties, any more than to be spoilt on the giddy heights of fortune—such was this great man, —great, pre-eminently great, whether we regard him sustaining alone the whole weight of campaigns all but desperate, or gloriously terminating a just warfare by his resources and his courage—presiding over the jarring elements of his political council, alike deaf to the storms of all extremes—or directing the formation of a new government for a great people, the first time that so vast an experiment had ever been tried by man—or finally retiring from the supreme power to which his virtue had raised him over the nation he had created, and whose destinies he had guided as long as his aid was required—retiring with the veneration of all parties, of all nations, of all mankind, in order that the rights of men might be conserved, and that his example never might be appealed to by vulgar tyrants. This is the consummate glory of Washington; a triumphant warrior where the most sanguine had a right to despair; a successful ruler in all the difficulties of a course wholly untried; but a warrior, whose sword only left its sheath when the first law of our nature commanded it to be drawn; and a ruler who, having tasted of supreme power, gently and unostentatiously desired that the cup might pass from him, nor would suffer more to wet his lips than the most solemn and sacred duty to his Country and his God required!

To his latest breath did this great patriot maintain the noble character of a Captain the patron of Peace, and a Statesman the friend of Justice. Dying, he bequeathed to his heirs the sword which he had worn in the War for Liberty, and charged them "Never to take it from the scabbard but in self-defence, or in defence of their country and her freedom; and commanding them, that when it should thus be drawn, they should never sheath it nor ever give it up, but prefer falling with it in their hands to the relinquishment thereof"—

words, the majesty and simple eloquence of which are not surpassed in the oratory of Athens and Rome.

It will be the duty of the Historian and the Sage in all ages to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man; and, until time shall be no more, will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and in virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of WASHINGTON!

APPENDIX.

No. I.

SEVERAL of the Sketches contained in this volume have already appeared in print, but as parts scattered throughout other and much larger works. But great additions have been here made to some of them: as George III.; Lord Chatham; Mr. Perceval; Mr. Canning; Mr. Windham; while the following are entirely new: Lords North; Mansfield; Thurlow; Loughborough; Lord Chief Justice Gibbs; Sir Wm. Grant; Franklin; Joseph II,; Catherine II.; Gustavus III.; and the Remarks on Party.

No. II.

THE kindness of a most accomplished and venerable person, the ornament of a former age, and fortunately still preserved to enlighten the present, has permitted the insertion of the following interesting note:—

"A circumstance attended Lord Chatham's eloquent invective against our employment of the Indians in the American war, which we have not handed down to us along with it, but which could hardly fail to be noticed at the time. The very same thing had been done in the former war, carried on in Canada by his authority and under his own immediate superintendence; the French had arrayed a tribe of these savage warriors against us, and we, without scruple, arrayed another against them. This he thought fit to deny in the most positive manner, although the ministers offered to produce documents written by himself that proved it, from among the papers at the Secretary's office. A warm debate ensued, and at length Lord Amherst, the General who had commanded our troops in that Canadian war, was so loudly appealed to on all sides, that it compelled him to rise, and, most unwillingly (for he greatly respected Lord Chatham), falter out a few words; enough however to acknowledge the fact—a fact admitted generally and even assumed by the opposition lords who spoke afterwards. They seemed to lay the question quietly by as far as it concerned Lord Chatham's veracity, and only insisted upon the difference between the two wars, the one foreign, the other civil; arguing also, that we might have been under some necessity of using retaliation, since the French certainly first began the practice so justly abhorred. The Annual Register for 1777 states, that Mr. Burke took the same course in the House of Commons.

"Upon hearing what had passed in the House of Lords, Lord Bute exclaimed with astonishment—'Did Pitt really deny it?—Why, I have letters of his still by me, singing *Io Pæans* over the advantages we gained through our Indian allies.' Could what he thus said have been untrue, when it was almost a soliloquy spoken rather *before* than *to* his wife and daughters, the only persons present? The letters

he mentioned were probably neither official nor confidential, but such common notes as might pass between him and Lord Chatham while still upon a footing of some intimacy.

"It must be observed, that in 1777 Lord Bute had long withdrawn from all political connexions, lived in great retirement, and had no intercourse whatever with the people then in power."

No. III.

THE following very interesting letter is from the youngest and only surviving daughter of Lord North. All comment upon its merits or its value is superfluous:—

"MY DEAR LORD BROUGHAM,

"YOU mentioned to me the other night, your intention of writing the character of my father, to be placed among some other characters of the statesmen of the last century, that you are preparing for the press, and at the same time stated the difficulty of describing a man of whom you had had no personal knowledge. This conversation has induced me to cast back my mind to the days of my childhood and early youth, that I may give you such impressions of my father's private life, as those recollections will afford.

"Lord North was born in April, 1732; he was educated at Eton school, and then at Trinity College, Oxford; and he completed his academical studies with the reputation of being a very accomplished and elegant classical scholar. He then passed three years upon the Continent, residing successively in Germany, Italy, and France, and acquiring the languages of those countries, particularly of the last. He spoke French with great fluency and correctness; this acquirement, together with the observations he made upon the men and manners of the countries he had visited, gave him what Madame de Staël called *l'Esprit Européen*, and enabled him to be as agreeable a man in Paris, Naples, and Vienna, as he was in London. Among the lighter accomplishments he acquired upon the Continent, was that of dancing; I have been told that he danced the most graceful minuet of any young man of his day; this I must own surprised me, who remember him only with a corpulent heavy figure, the movements of which were rendered more awkward and were impeded by his extreme near-sightedness before he became totally blind. In his youth, however, his figure was slight and slim; his face was always plain, but agreeable, owing to its habitual expression of cheerfulness and good humour; though it gave no indication of the brightness of his understanding.

"Soon after his return to England, at the age of twenty-three, he was married to Miss Speck, of Whitelackington Park, Somersetshire, a girl of sixteen: she was plain in her person, but had excellent good sense; and was blessed with singular mildness and placidity of temper. She was also not deficient in humour, and her conversational powers were by no means contemptible; but she, like the rest of the world, delighted in her husband's conversation, and, being by nature shy and indolent, was contented to be a happy listener during his life, and after his death her spirits were too much broken down for her to care what she was. Whether they had been in love with each other when they married I don't know, but I am sure there never was a more happy union than theirs during the thirty-six years that it lasted. I never saw an unkind look, or heard an unkind word pass

between them; his affectionate attachment to her was as unabated, as her love and admiration of him.

"Lord North came into office first, as one of the Lords of the Treasury, I believe, about the year 1763, and in 1765 he was appointed as one of the Joint Paymasters.* In 1769 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and some years after First Lord of the Treasury. He never would allow us to call him Prime Minister, saying, there was no such thing in the British Constitution. He continued in office thirteen years: during the last three he was most anxious to retire, but he suffered himself to be overcome by the earnest entreaties of George the Third that he should remain. At length, the declining majorities in the House of Commons made it evident, that there must be a change of ministry, and the King was obliged reluctantly to receive his resignation. This was a great relief to his mind; for, although I do not believe that my father ever entertained any doubt as to the justice of the American war, yet I am sure that he wished to have made peace three years before its termination. I perfectly recollect the satisfaction expressed by my mother and my elder sisters upon this occasion, and my own astonishment at it; being at that time a girl of eleven years old, and hearing in the nursery the lamentations of the women about 'My Lord's going out of power' (viz., the power of making their husbands tide-waiters), I thought going out of power must be a sad thing, and that all the family were crazy to rejoice at it!

"It is hardly necessary to say, that Lord North was perfectly clean-handed and pure in money matters, and that he left office a poorer man than when he came into it. His father being still living at that time, his income would have scantily provided for the education and maintenance of his six children, and for the support of his habitual, though unostentatious hospitality, but the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports becoming vacant, the King conferred it upon him. His circumstances, by this means, became adequate to his wishes, as he had no expensive tastes, or love of splendour, but he was thoroughly liberal, and had great enjoyment in social intercourse, which even in those days was not to be had without expense. Lord North did not long continue out of office, the much criticised Coalition taking place the year following, 1783. The proverb says, 'Necessity acquaints us with strange bedfellows:' it is no less true, that dislike of a third party reconciles adversaries. My eldest brother was a Whig by nature, and an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Fox; he, together with Mr. Adam, and Mr. Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), were, I believe, the chief promoters of the Coalition. My mother, I remember, was adverse to it, not that she troubled her head with being a Tory or a Whig, but she feared it would compromise her husband's political consistency. I do not pretend to give any opinion upon this subject, having been too young at the time to form any, and since I grew up I have always been too decided a Whig myself to be a fair judge. This ministry, in which Mr. Fox was at the head of the Foreign, Lord North of the Home Office, and the Duke of Portland of the Treasury, lasted but a few months: in 1784 Mr. Pitt began his long adminis-

* An anecdote is related of his Paymastership which will paint, though in homely colours, his habitual good humour. He was somewhat disappointed at finding he had a colleague, who was to divide the emoluments of the office, which was then chiefly prized for its large perquisities. The day he took possession of the official house, a dog had dirtied the hall, and Lord North, ringing for the servant, told him to be sure, in clearing the nastiness away, that he took half of it to his colleague, as it was a perquisite of the Joint office.—EDITOR.

tration. My father, after he was out of office, attended parliament, and sometimes spoke and voted, independent of the opinions of his new allies; but this made no difference in the cordiality of their friendship, which remained unimpaired to the end of his life.

"I will now attempt to give you my impressions of my father's style of conversation and character in private life. His wit was of the most genuine and playful kind; he related (*narrait*) remarkably well, and liked conversing upon literary subjects; yet so completely were all these ingredients mixed and amalgamated by good taste, that you would never have described him as a sayer of *bon mots*, or a teller of good stories, or as a man of literature, but as a most agreeable member of society and truly delightful companion. His manners were those of a high-bred gentleman, particularly easy and natural; indeed, good breeding was so marked a part of his character, that it would have been affectation in him to have been otherwise than well bred. With such good taste and good breeding, his raillery could not fail to be of the best sort—always amusing and never wounding. He was the least fastidious of men, possessing the happy art of extracting any good that there was to be extracted out of anybody. He never would let his children call people *bores;* and I remember the triumphant joy of the family, when, after a tedious visit from a very prosy and empty man, he exclaimed, 'Well, that man *is* an insufferable bore!' He used frequently to have large parties of foreigners and distinguished persons to dine with him at Bushy Park. He was himself the life and soul of those parties. To have seen him then, you would have said that he was there in his true element. Yet I think that he had really more enjoyment when he went into the country on a Saturday and Sunday, with only his own family, or one or two intimate friends: he then entered into all the jokes and fun of his elder children, was the companion and intimate friend of his sons and daughters, and the merry, entertaining playfellow of his little girl, who was five years younger than any of the others. To his servants he was a most kind and indulgent master: if provoked by stupidity or impertinence, a few hasty, *impatient* words might escape him; but I never saw him *really out of humour*. He had a drunken, stupid groom, who used to provoke him; and who, from this uncommon circumstance, was called by the children 'the man that puts papa in a passion;' and I think he continued all his life putting papa in a passion, and being forgiven, for I believe he died in his service.

"In the year 1787 Lord North's sight began rapidly to fail him, and in the course of a few months he became totally blind, in consequence of a palsy on the optic nerve. His nerves had always been very excitable, and it is probable that the anxiety of mind which he suffered during the unsuccessful contest with America, still more than his necessary application to writing, brought on this calamity, which he bore with the most admirable patience and resignation; nor did it affect his general cheerfulness in society. But the privation of all power of dissipating his mind by outward objects, or of solitary occupation, could not fail to produce at times extreme depression of spirits, especially as the malady proceeded from the disordered state of his nerves. These fits of depression seldom occurred, except during sleepless nights, when my mother used to read to him, until he was amused out of them, or put to sleep.

"In the evenings, in Grosvenor-square, our house was the resort of the best company that London afforded at that time. Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan, occasionally; and Lord Stormont, Lord John Townshend, Mr. Windham, Sir

James Erskine, afterwards Lord Rosslyn, his uncle, then Lord Loughborough, habitually frequented our drawing-room: these, with various young men and women, his children's friends, and whist-playing ladies for my mother, completed the society. My father always liked the company of young people, especially of young women who were sensible and lively; and we used to accuse him of often rejoicing when his old political friends left his sides and were succeeded by some lively young female. Lord North, when he was out of office, had no private secretary; even after he became blind, his daughters, particularly the two elder, read to him by turns, wrote his letters, led him in his walks, and were his constant companions.

"In 1792 his health began to decline: he lost his sleep and his appetite; his legs swelled, and symptoms of dropsy were apparent. At last, after a peculiarly uneasy night, he questioned his friend and physician, Dr. Warren, begging him not to conceal the truth: the result was, that Dr. Warren owned that water had formed upon the chest, that he could not live many days, and that a few hours might put a period to his existence. He received this news not only with firmness and pious resignation, but it in no way altered the serenity and cheerfulness of his manners; and from that hour, during the remaining ten days of his life, he had no return of depression of spirits. The first step he took, when aware of his immediate danger, was to desire that Mr. John Robinson (commonly known by the name of *the Rat-catcher*) and Lord Auckland might be sent for; they being the only two of his political friends whose desertion had hurt and offended him, he wished before his death to shake hands cordially and to forgive them. They attended the summons, of course, and the reconciliation was effected. My father had always delighted in hearing his eldest daughter, Lady Glenbervie, read Shakspeare, which she did with much understanding and effect. He was desirous of still enjoying this amusement. In the existing circumstances, this task was a hard one; but strong affection, the best source of woman's strength, enabled her to go through it. She read to him great part of every day with her usual spirit, though her heart was dying within her. No doubt she was supported by the Almighty in the pious work of solacing the last hours of her almost idolised parent. He also desired to have the French newspapers read to him. At that time they were filled with alarming symptoms of the horrors that shortly after ensued. Upon hearing them, he said, 'I am going, and thankful I am that I shall not witness the anarchy and bloodshed which will soon overwhelm that unhappy country.' He expired on the 5th of August, 1792.

"Lord North was a truly pious Christian; and (although from his political view of the subject) I believe that one of the last speeches he made in parliament was against the repeal of the Test Act, yet his religion was quite free from bigotry or intolerance, and consisted more in the beautiful spirit of Christian benevolence than in outward and formal observances. His character in private life was, I believe, as faultless as that of any human being can be; and those actions of his public life which appear to have been the most questionable, proceeded, I am entirely convinced, from what one must own was a weakness, though not an unamiable one, and which followed him through his life, the want of power to resist the influence of those he loved.

"I remain, My dear Lord, gratefully and sincerely yours,

"CHARLOTTE LINDSAY.

"*Green-street, February the 18th*, 1839."

No. IV.

*Elizabeth's conduct to Mary, Queen of Scots.**

THE whole subject of Mary's conduct has been involved in controversy, chiefly by the partisans of the House of Stuart after the Revolution, and somewhat also by the circumstance of the Catholic party in both England and Scotland taking her part as an enemy of the Reformed religion. Elizabeth's conduct towards her has also in a considerable degree been made the subject of political disputation. But it may safely be affirmed that there are certain facts, which cannot be doubted, which indeed even the most violent partisans of both those Princesses have all along admitted, and which tend to throw a great, though certainly a very unequal degree of blame upon both.—Let us first of all state those unquestioned facts.

1. It is certain that Darnley, Mary's second husband, was foully murdered, and equally certain that Mary was generally suspected, and was openly charged, as an accomplice in the murder, if not the contriver of the crime.

2. Yet it is equally certain that instead of taking those active steps to bring the perpetrators to punishment, required both by conjugal duty and by a just desire to wipe off the stain affixed to her character, she allowed a mere mock trial to take place which outraged every principle of justice, while she refused Lennox the father's offers of evidence to convict the murderers.

3. Bothwell had only of late been admitted to her intimate society; he was a man of coarse manners and profligate character, universally accused and now known as having been the principal in the murder. No one pretended at the time seriously to doubt his guilt; yet immediately after the event she married him, and married him with a mixture of fraud, a pretence of being forced to it, so coarse that it could deceive nobody, and so gross as only to be exceeded by the still grosser passion which actuated her whole conduct.

4. That he was married when their intimacy began, is not denied. Nor is it doubted that she consented to marry him before his former marriage had been dissolved.

5. The divorce which dissolved it was hurried through the Courts in four days, by the grossest fraud and collusion between the parties. Hence Mary was as much guilty of bigamy in marrying him as was the Duchess of Kingston two centuries later; for the Duchess produced also a sentence of separation *à mensâ et thoro* in her defence, obtained with incomparably greater formality—but obtained through collusion, and therefore considered as a nullity—and she was accordingly convicted of the felony.

6. These acts of Mary's were of so abominable a nature that all rational men were turned away from supporting her, and her deposition was almost a matter of course in any Christian or indeed any civilised country.

But as regards Elizabeth:

1. When Mary took refuge in England, all her previous misconduct gave Eli-

* This Appendix has been added in deference to the suggestion of a friend, whose sound judgment and correct taste are entitled to command all respect, and who considered that an unjust view would be given of Elizabeth's conduct if no addition were made to the sketch in the text.

zabeth no kind of title to detain her as a prisoner, nor any right even to deliver her up as a prisoner at the request of the Scots, had they demanded her.

2. In keeping her a prisoner for twenty years under various pretexts, Elizabeth gave her ample licence and complete justification for whatever designs she might form to regain her liberty.

3. The conspiracy of Norfolk looked only to the maintaining of her strict rights, the restoration of her personal liberty, and her marriage with that ill-fated nobleman, which she was willing to solemnize as soon as she could be divorced from Bothwell; who, having lived for some years as a pirate, afterwards died mad in a Danish prison.

4. Babington's conspiracy included rebellion and also the assassination of Elizabeth; and great and certainly very fruitless pains are taken by Mary's partisans to rebut the proofs of her having joined in it. She indeed, never pretended to resist the proof that she was a party to the conspiracy in general; she only denied her knowledge of the projected assassination. But supposing her to have been also cognisant of that, it seems not too relaxed a view of duty to hold that one sovereign princess, detained injustifiably in captivity by another for twenty years, has a right to use even extreme measures of revenge. In self-defence all means are justifiable, and Mary had no other means than war to the knife against her oppressor.

5. For this accession to Babington's conspiracy, chiefly, she was brought to trial by that oppressor, who had violated every principle of justice and every form of law, in holding her a prisoner for twenty years.

6. Being convicted on this trial, the sentence was executed by Elizabeth's express authority; although, with a complication of falsehood utterly disgusting, and which holds her character up to the scorn of mankind in all ages, she pretended that it had been done without her leave and against her will, and basely ruined the unfortunate man, who, yielding to her commands, had conveyed to be executed the orders she had signed with her own hand.

The pretence upon which the proceeding of the trial may the most plausibly be defended, is, that a Foreign Prince while in this country, like all foreigners within its bounds, is subject to the municipal law, and may be punished for its violation. This, however, is a groundless position in law, even if the Foreign Prince were voluntarily here resident; for not even his representative, his ambassador, is subject to our laws, either civil or criminal, as a statute declaratory of the former law has distinctly laid down,* although at an earlier period Cromwell hanged one for murder. But if it be said this part of international law had not been well settled in the sixteenth century, at all events it was well known then that no power can have a right to seize on the person of a Foreign Prince and detain him prisoner; and that, consequently, if so detained, that Foreign Prince owes no allegiance to the laws of the realm.

But although Elizabeth's conduct towards Mary Stuart is wholly unjustifiable, and fixes a deep stain upon her memory (blackened still more by the gross falsehood and hypocrisy with which it was thickly covered over), it may nevertheless be said that she merits the commendation of having acted against her kinswoman with open hostility, and sacrificed her by the forms at least of a trial, instead of procuring her life to be privately taken away. A little reflection will remove any

* The Stat, 7 Anne, c. 12.

such argument used in mitigation of her crime. That she preferred murder by due course of law to murder by poison, was the merit of the age rather than of the person. Two centuries, perhaps one, earlier, she would have used the secret services of the gaoler in preference to the public prostitution of the judge. But she knew that Mary's death, if it happened in prison, even in the course of nature, would always be charged upon her as its author; and she was unwilling to load her name with the shame, even if she cared not how her conscience might be burdened with the guilt. She was well aware, too, of the formidable party which Mary had in the country, and dreaded not only to exasperate the Catholic body, but to furnish them with the weapons against herself which so great an outrage on the feelings of mankind would have placed in their hands. Besides, she well knew that the trial was a matter of easy execution and of certain result. She was delivered over, not to a judge and jury acting under the authority of the law in its ordinary course of administration, but to forty peers and privy councillors, selected by Elizabeth herself, whose very numbers, by dividing the responsibility, made their submission to the power that appointed them a matter of perfect ease, and the conviction of Mary an absolute certainty. In every view, then, which can be taken of the case, little credit can accrue to Elizabeth for preferring a mode of destroying her rival quite as easy, quite as sure, and far more safe, than any other: not to mention that it must be a strange kind of honour which can stoop to seek the wretched credit of having declined to commit a midnight murder, rather than destroy the victim by an open trial.

If, then, it be asked upon what grounds Elizabeth's memory has escaped the execration so justly due to it, the answer is found not merely in the splendour of her other actions, and the great success of her long reign under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty, but rather in the previous bad conduct of Mary—the utter scorn in which all mankind held her, except those whom personal attachment or religious frenzy blinded—the certain effect of time in opening the eyes of even those zealots, when her truly despicable conduct came to be considered—*and chiefly* in the belief that she, who was supposed to have joined in the assassination of her own husband, and was admitted to have married his brutal murderer while his hands were still reeking with blood, had also been a party to a plot for assassinating the English queen. These considerations have not unnaturally operated on men's minds against the victim of Elizabeth's crooked and cruel policy; and it is an unavoidable consequence of sympathy for the oppressed being weakened, that the hatred of the oppressor is diminished in proportion.

The foregoing statements have proceeded upon the plan of assuming no facts as true respecting the conduct either of Mary or Elizabeth, excepting those which are on all hands admitted, and which have indeed never been denied, either at the time, or in the heats engendered by subsequent controversy. The result is against both those famous Queens; loading the memory of the one with a degree of infamy which no woman of ordinary feeling could endure, subjecting the other to the gravest charges of perfidy and injustice. But it would be giving a very imperfect view of Mary's conduct were we to stop at these admitted facts.

The proofs against her in respect of Darnley's murder, although not sufficient to convict her in a court of justice, are quite decisive of her guilt, when the question is propounded as one of historical evidence. Indeed, it may be safely affirmed, that no disputed point of historical fact rests upon stronger evidence. The arguments to prove the letters genuine are not easily resisted. Mr. Hume's admirable summary

of those arguments is nearly conclusive. The other concurring circumstances, as the statements of Bothwell's servants at their execution, are also very strong. But above everything, her own conduct, both in obstructing all search after the murderers, and in immediately marrying their ringleader, seems to place her guilt beyond a doubt. Even this, however, is not all. She submitted the case to a solemn investigation, when she found that the effects of her infamy were fatal to her party, clouding over all her prospects of success, or even of deliverance; and as soon as the worst part of the charges against her were brought forward, and the most decisive evidences of her guilt adduced, the letters under her own hand, she did not meet the charge or even attempt to prove the writings forgeries, but sought shelter behind general protestations, and endeavoured to change the inquiry into a negociation, although distinctly warned that such a conduct of her case was flying from the trial to which she had submitted, and must prove quite demonstrative of her guilt.

On the whole, it is not going too far to close these remarks with Mr. Hume's observation, that there are three descriptions of men who must be considered beyond the reach of argument, and must be left to their prejudices—an English Whig, who asserts the reality of the Popish plot; an Irish Catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641; and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of Queen Mary.

It is, however, fit that a remark be added touching the error into which this justly celebrated historian has fallen, and which shows that he knew very little of what legal evidence is, how expertly soever he might deal with historical evidence. After enumerating the proofs adduced at the trial of Mary's accession to the assassination part of Babington's plot, namely, copies taken in Walsingham's office of correspondence with Babington; the confessions of her two secretaries, without torture, but in her absence, and without confronting or cross-examination; Babington's confession, and the confession of Ballard and Savage, that Babington had shown them Mary's letters in cipher,—the historian adds, that, "in the case of an ordinary criminal, this proof would be esteemed legal and even satisfactory, if not opposed by some other circumstances which shake the credit of the witnesses." Nothing can betray greater ignorance of the very first principles of the law of evidence. The witnesses he speaks of do not even exist; there is nothing like a witness mentioned in his enumeration of proofs, and how any man of Mr. Hume's acuteness could fancy that what one person confesses behind a prisoner's back that he heard a third person say to that prisoner, or rather that this third person showed him ciphered letters not produced of that prisoner, could be anything like evidence to affect him, is truly astonishing, and shows how dangerous a thing it is for the artist most expert in his own line to pronounce an opinion on matters beyond it.

THE END.

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